

THE LIFE AND WORK OF *MOUNTAIN LIFE AND WORK*  
AN INTRODUCTORY HISTORY OF AN APPALACHIAN PUBLICATION

A Thesis  
by  
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## **Abstract**

### THE LIFE AND WORK OF *MOUNTAIN LIFE AND WORK* AN INTRODUCTORY HISTORY OF AN APPALACHIAN PUBLICATION

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*Mountain Life and Work* was the first periodical publication devoted exclusively to the interests of the residents of the Appalachian mountain region. It was published by the Council of the Southern Mountains from 1925 to 1988 and circulated throughout Appalachia and the United States, covering topics from education reform to coal union organizing, from handicrafts to poetry, editorials, photographs, and advertisements. *Mountain Life and Work* is a major primary source for regional history and Appalachian Studies, but very little is known about it today. This thesis is meant to provide a basic history of this publication and demonstrate how the evolution of *Mountain Life and Work* is indicative of changing responses to Appalachia. *Mountain Life and Work* began as reform-centered newsletter for educated professionals, intending to speak for the mountain people, but transformed into a primary voice of Appalachia, created by its readers. Throughout its run, *Mountain Life and Work* highlighted the importance of community building and traditions while focusing on education, development, and finally activism. *Mountain*



*Life and Work* can be separated into three different “eras,” each of which can be defined by distinct characteristics pertaining to the magazine’s content, creators, and subscribers. Using archival documents and theoretical approaches including Helen Lewis’s colonialism, John Gaventa’s power structures, and Stephen Fisher’s notions of community-based resistance, this thesis explores each era of *Mountain Life and Work* to tell the story of how this magazine documented the development of Appalachia and became the voice of the region.

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## Chapter One—A Case for *Mountain Life and Work*

In the fortieth anniversary issue of *Mountain Life and Work*, published in 1965, the original editor Marshall E. Vaughn wrote that at its beginning in 1925, “some ‘doubting Thomases thought it would be a short-time, wild experiment” (41.2, 1)<sup>1</sup> but forty years later it was thriving, and continued to do so for twenty-three more years. *Mountain Life and Work* was the first periodical publication devoted exclusively to the interests of the residents of the Appalachian mountain region. It was published by the Council of the Southern Mountains from 1925 to 1988, first out of Berea College in Berea, Kentucky, and in later years from new offices in Clintwood, Virginia. Throughout these sixty-three years, *Mountain Life and Work* (*MLW*) had several titles, more than ten editors, and countless editorial staff and contributors. *MLW* appears cited in Appalachian Studies scholarship about nearly every subject in the discipline, from education reform to coal union organizing to handicrafts, and *MLW* includes editorials, photographs, and advertisements.

The objectives and focuses of *Mountain Life and Work* changed drastically between 1925 and 1988. It started as a conservative advocacy tool for religious and educational reform, run by a small group of educated people from outside the mountain area. It was meant to “alter the public image of Appalachia by changing the thinking of the outside world about the region and its people” (Hasbrouck 1726) and advertised itself as an interpreter for the mountains, seeking to reform social systems in a more sympathetic way than previous Protestant home missions. Throughout its span, *MLW* transformed into a radical, community-driven resource for activism and change, shedding its institutional associations and becoming a hub for grassroots organizing and community development.

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<sup>1</sup> Citations for articles from *Mountain Life and Work* will be written as follows: *MLW*, volume number, issue number, page number (i.e. *MLW*, 41.2, 1 for volume 42, issue 2, page 1).

*Mountain Life and Work* started by focusing heavily on work in settlement schools, regional colleges, and meetings of the Council of the Southern Mountains. Gradually the articles in *MLW* tended toward broader subjects like sociological and economic issues that were important to a wider range of citizens. *MLW* addressed such topics as race relations and poverty in the 1940s, and more Appalachian people not affiliated with the Council became contributors. The magazine began to target consumers and the working class in the 1950s, including more advertisements and articles about everyday concerns. During its last twenty-five years, *MLW* became the primary voice of activism in the Appalachian Mountains. It published the most current news and exposés about strip mining issues, the textile industry, black and brown lung, unemployment, labor unions, and environmental concerns. It became a voice of the people, and citizens used *Mountain Life and Work* as a catalyst to form unions and communicate about movements in different areas. With each subsequent era, each year, and even each issue, *MLW* gradually shifted from “interpreting” the Appalachian people to functioning as the voice of the Appalachian people. It went from being written *about* them to being written *by* them. *MLW* illustrates how people of Appalachia gradually went from being spoken for to speaking out. What started out as a narrow, institution-based program of reform finally became a community-driven forum for facilitating change. This change occurred in both the interdisciplinary field of Appalachian Studies and the region.

Even though *MLW* is a constant fixture in bibliographies of Appalachian Studies scholarship, there is very little scholarship about the magazine itself. With few exceptions, the only way to access *MLW* is by thumbing page-by-page through each issue in an archive. Due to lack of digitization or cohesive referencing, *Mountain Life and Work* is being phased out of prominence in Appalachian Studies, but its story reflects how the field developed and

holds a wealth of valuable information about the history of Appalachia. To keep *Mountain Life and Work* as a valuable source of history about Appalachian culture, we must create scholarship that preserves the history of *MLW* and those who created it. The purpose of this thesis is to begin this endeavor with a basic history of the production of *Mountain Life and Work*, giving us a glimpse of how *Mountain Life and Work* changed along with a changing Appalachia. This thesis will provide an introductory history and survey of *Mountain Life and Work* to examine that transformation, focusing on close examination of the magazine contents and publication procedures, along with archival research about the staff, the Council, and subscribers.

*Mountain Life and Work* can be distinctly divided into three different eras. The most obvious difference between these eras is the magazine's format, but each shift in format occurred with major changes in the magazine's creators, subscribers, and content—often all three. Major rifts and changes in the Council occurred concurrently with the beginnings and endings of these eras. Points of change in the presentation of the magazine were almost always accompanied by changes that changed the purpose and scope of *Mountain Life and Work*.

### **Existing Scholarship About *Mountain Life and Work***

Most existing scholarship about *MLW* is about the Council of the Southern Mountains and mentions *MLW* just in passing. A few scholars have addressed the magazine itself. Catherine C. Mitchell and C. Joan Schnyder's 1989 article "Public Relations for Appalachia: Berea's *Mountain Life and Work*" discusses the first five years of *MLW* as essentially a tool of colonialism, intended to reform mountain people, and their methodology

of examining the relationship between the editors, audience, and magazine's content is the same approach my thesis will take. Mitchell and Schnyder write that the magazine mostly functioned as "public relations aimed at a national audience" (975), specifically public relations for Berea College. They point out that, though *MLW* professed to be changing the public image of Appalachia, it was merely "reinforcing the attractive components of the existing stereotype" (977) which is evident in *MLW*'s focus on handicrafts and music.

Penny Messinger in her many works about women in the CSM examines the role of women, especially Helen Dingman, in the formation of *MLW*. Her thesis for Ohio University titled "Children of the Past, Women of Time & Change: Women in Mountain Life and Work 1925-1933" is the first existing piece of scholarship focusing specifically on *MLW*. She writes in her introduction that *MLW* has "not received a large amount of scholarly attention" ("Children" 11) and this is still the case. Messinger's work will appear discussed in detail throughout the thesis. Chris Green and Erica Abrams Locklear discuss *MLW*'s use of fiction and poetry, and how the inclusion or exclusion of literature in the magazine was indicative of the publication's objectives of the time. According to Green and Locklear, 1960's *MLW* was "the most important venue for combining Appalachian studies and literature" (65). They point out that after the publication "radicalized," traditional fiction/poetry took a backseat to the lyrics of labor songs, but still, *MLW* "opened the field...for other periodicals addressing Appalachian culture and literature" (Green and Locklear 65). Green and Locklear's work places *MLW* in the large scope of Appalachian literature and recognizes its importance in developing Appalachian literature as a distinct genre. Other than these works, discussion of *MLW* is confined to its role as a product of the Council.



## The Council of the Southern Mountains

*Mountain Life and Work* was for most of its span the “organ” of the Council of the Southern Mountains, so a history of the magazine must discuss the CSM. Because so much outstanding scholarship about the Council has been written, this thesis will not attempt a comprehensive summary of existing histories of the Council, but instead focus on the magazine. But, as the Council wrote in a 1966 proposal, “it should be obvious that what happens to the magazine will profoundly affect the average person’s understanding of what is happening to the Council itself” (CSM Papers, 8.260.1).<sup>2</sup> The relationship between the CSM and its magazine shifted throughout the years, but they were always very much related. However, for the purposes of this thesis, extensive details about the Council’s history not directly related to *MLW* will be excluded, but references to these sources can be found in the bibliography.

Among this wealth of information about the Council of the Southern Mountains, there is a surprisingly little amount of it directly addressing *Mountain Life and Work*. The most definitive history of the CSM is historian David Whisnant’s 1980 book *Modernizing the Mountaineer*, which includes a thorough examination of CSM’s history. At the time of Whisnant’s writing, *MLW* would continue to be produced for eight more years. Whisnant’s history is the principal source of background information about the Council throughout this thesis.

The Council of the Southern Mountains began in 1913 as the Southern Mountain Workers Conference. It was organized by John C. Campbell and Olive Dame Campbell, using funds from the Russel Sage Foundation. Campbell intended for the conference to

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<sup>2</sup> Citations for items from the Council of the Southern Mountains papers will be written as follows: CSM Papers, series number, box number, folder number (i.e. CSM Papers, 8.260.1).

“establish contact among the various human service workers in the mountains, reduce the rivalry among church workers and missionaries...and to connect both groups with larger national organizations” (Obermiller & Wagner 6). Its members were primarily “home missionaries, charity workers, health reformers, educators, and social workers” (Green, *Poetry*, 135). John C. Campbell died in 1919 and Olive focused her work on studying Danish folk schools, which led to the establishment of the John C. Campbell Folk School. According to Whisnant, after Campbell’s death the Council “took a more conservative turn,” (5).

Whisnant cites the Anglo-Saxon thesis and Presbyterian church as major influences in the Council’s initial work in developing a “Program for the Mountains,” essentially a program of reform that echoed the work of home missionaries but with a slightly more progressive, education-focused bent.

The Russell Sage Foundation, and therefore the CSM, were interested in professionalizing social work, especially in the 1910s and ’20s, and ideas of “benevolent work” were prominent in early CSM projects which led to *MLW*. According to Henry Shapiro, benevolent work or “mountain white work”—evangelical and educational work in the mountains—emerged as a distinct missionary activity in 1886, spearheaded by the Presbyterian church (54).

Other scholars have written important summaries of the purpose and focus of CSM within the context of more specific research. These scholars inform much of the background information and supplementary writing about the Council in my thesis. Among the most important is Penny Messinger, a historian who has written many studies of women’s work in Appalachia, focusing especially on Helen Dingman and women in *MLW*. Her article “Professionalizing ‘Mountain Work’ in Appalachia: Women in the Conference of the

Southern Mountain Workers” criticizes other scholarship about the CSM for “quickly dispos[ing]” of Helen Dingman’s fourteen-year editor/executive secretary career. Messinger credits Dingman and Olive Dame Campbell for establishing the CSM at the forefront of Appalachian reform efforts, spearheading the craft revival in institutions, and making alliances with “the women who comprised a numerical majority among the mountain workers” (“Professionalizing” 223). At this point, “mountain workers” and then *Mountain Life and Work* did not refer to the life and work of actual mountain residents, but of the reformers working in the mountains, or social workers. These social workers were primarily women. Women were professionals creating social work positions in Appalachia because work in established fields of medicine, ministry, et cetera, were for “men.” But once social work was established, it “proved attractive to men” and resulted in women being excluded from fields they themselves had created (Messinger, “Professionalizing” 225).

Phillip Obermiller and Thomas Wagner investigated the Council’s involvement in urban Appalachia in their study “Hands-Across-The-Ohio: The Urban Initiatives of the Council of the Southern Mountains, 1954-1971.” This period of *MLW* saw the least amount of changes in the magazine, as well as the narrowest scope of coverage, but the focus on outmigration from the region was a marked characteristic of this era to which Obermiller and Wagner give great attention. This departure from the usually rural scope is discussed in detail in Chapter 3. John Glen wrote about the later years of CSM (post 1960) in its years under the direction of Perley Ayer in his article “The War on Poverty in Appalachia—A Preliminary Report,” published just one year after the demise of CSM and *MLW*. According to Glen, during this time the CSM was “the most prominent and influential voice in southern Appalachia” (43). Glen especially focuses on the “War on Poverty” and the Appalachian

Volunteers, a program of the CSM. Glen writes that the “War on Poverty” was a “lost cause” because the poor people the war was meant to help were unwilling to organize by their own terms. The Appalachian Volunteers split from the Council in 1966 due to conflict over Perley Ayer’s management, and later that year Loyal Jones took over the Council (Glen 53).

Thomas Kiffmeyer focused on the Appalachian Volunteers and the War on Poverty more closely in his monograph *Reformers to Radicals: The Appalachian Volunteers and the War on Poverty*. Kiffmeyer cites William Goodell Frost, president of Berea College at the time CSM was founded, as coining the term “culture of poverty” which contributed heavily to the general notion of Appalachian “otherness” that reformers set out to solve (7). Like Glen, Kiffmeyer calls the War on Poverty a losing battle, which the Appalachian Volunteers “lost when they abandoned their focus on local people, asserted their own agenda, and attempted a frontal assault on their more powerful adversaries” (14). Kiffmeyer focuses on the Council in the early 1960s, when under the administration of Perley Ayer, it was “the largest, most significant social service agency operating in the Appalachian coalfields and in those Northern cities to which Appalachians had migrated” (20). Kiffmeyer especially draws attention to the Council’s and Volunteers’ work in urban Appalachia, helping rural transplants in Appalachian cities.

### **Beginnings: Colonialism**

Most scholarship about *Mountain Life and Work* focuses on its early years and discusses the magazine as a tool of colonialism, implemented by outside missionaries and reformers to “fix” the mountain people. Historian and sociologist Helen Matthews Lewis and colleagues described this concept as it applies to Appalachia in *Colonialism in Modern*

*America: The Appalachian Case* They write that Appalachia was/is a “subsociety structurally alienated...the people are not essentially passive; but these ‘subcultural’ traits of fatalism, passivity, etc. are adjustive techniques of the powerless. They are ways by which people protect their way of life from new economic models and the concomitant alien culture” (qtd. Lewis et al. 115). Protestant home missions came into Appalachia armed with a “Program for the Mountains,” which *MLW* itself sought to implement in its early publication years. The missionary program emphasized “the need for education, skills, efficiency, planning, law and order, material conveniences, fear of God and a sense of duty” (Lewis et al. 130).

Arguments about colonialism do appear applicable to the first fifteen to twenty years of publication, or the first “era.” During this time the magazine was run by a small group of educated “liberal elite” and was generally attempting to reform the mountain people. Often it published articles written by “educated” city doctors and teachers, about their experiences traveling into remote rural towns and spreading their knowledge. Officials of religious institutions closely aligned with missionary work often published in *MLW*. During this era the magazine struggled to gain subscribers, as local people did not know about it. Instead, the editors of *MLW* sent free copies to superintendents of schools, churches, and charity organizations, hoping to build an audience of like-minded reformers.

But, even during this initial, most conservative era, *MLW* had more progressive intentions than are initially obvious. According to historian Henry D. Shapiro in *Appalachia On Our Mind*, by 1925 Protestant home missions had largely ended. These missions were most active during the 1880s-1890s. He writes that by 1915, missionary activity in Appalachia had “shifted from a focus on benevolent salvation and modernization to the maintenance of mountain distinctiveness...the establishment of a conscious community

within Appalachia...had become the new goal” (Shapiro, quoted by Blevins, 131). This turning point essentially meant that missionary impulses were no longer fixed on Appalachian “otherness” as a threat to be reckoned with, but a result of outside situations. By the time *MLW* began its attempts at reform, the reformers had realized that the Appalachian people did not need to be “integrated” and that “attempts to alter their reality” were not effective ways of bringing positive change (Shapiro 100).

The first issue of *Mountain Life and Work* was filled with articles acknowledging past colonialist efforts and claiming that the intention for *MLW* was to provide a form of back talk to those efforts, writing that it meant to change *perceptions* of Appalachian people, both their own and outsiders, rather than change the people themselves. These include “Purpose of This Magazine” by initial editor Marshall E. Vaughn (*MLW* 1.1, 2), “A Program for the Mountains” compiled by the publication board (*MLW* 1.1, 20) and a section titled “Greetings from Contributing Editors” (*MLW* 1.1, 5) which included a photograph and short description about each editor, as well as their own reasons for working on *MLW*. These testimonials cited ideas such as “interpreting the mountains” and “present[ing] different phases of life and work in the mountains in a sympathetic and broadminded manner” (*MLW* 1.1, 5-6). Most of these contributors lived outside the Appalachian region.

The magazine made clear that it did not find fault with the *people* as inherently flawed, but rather that they were victims of inferior religious and educational systems, and that through their work the Council and *MLW* would improve mountain life by improving its institutions. There was an understanding that Appalachian “otherness” was “legitimiz[ed]...as the natural consequence of the existence of a discrete region inhabited by a distinct people” (Shapiro 99). In 1925, this was a relatively new way of thinking about the

region and *MLW*, even in its earliest reform-centered years, was intended to be a tool of empowerment, a way to change the public image of Appalachia even before “Appalachia” was a widely recognized concept. This purpose remained constant throughout its sixty-eight years.

### **Neopopulism: Eras Two and Three**

Unlike the rhetorical triangle’s three sides that fit onto *MLW*’s three eras like a stencil, there are no three analytical frameworks that each best represent a particular era of *Mountain Life and Work*. As described, colonialism is applicable to a discussion of era one, but not the entirety of *MLW*. Eras two and three are more difficult to generalize. The theory that best encompasses the values of *MLW* during its second and third eras is the neopopulist theory *specifically* as political scientist Stephen L. Fisher applies it to Appalachian Studies in his edited collection *Fighting Back in Appalachia: Traditions of Resistance and Change*. The bulk of scholarship about neopopulism applies the theory to Latin American studies, but Fisher situates neopopulism in Appalachia highlighting the theory’s emphasis on empowerment, community-based resistance, focus on tradition and traditional values, and use of free spaces. These aspects all characterize *MLW*’s picture of Appalachia throughout its many years. The main ideas of Fisher’s description of neopopulism match the focus of *MLW*, and the magazine also became an example of a free space through its use of letters and forums.

Fisher acknowledges critiques of neopopulism as well—it has been dismissed for its vague terminology, its assumption that societies are inherently homogenous, and its disregard for logistics of power structure. I claim that these negative components of the theory *also*

pertain to *MLW* especially in its second era. Fisher writes that “too frequently, the cultural homogeneity, progressive nature, and good will of ‘the people’ are taken for granted in new populist writing. This conveniently ignores the ethnic, racial, gender, class, and cultural differences that so often divide ‘the people’” (*Fighting Back*, 322). This critique of neopopulism identifies its tendency to generalize, disregard diversity, and give attention to “progress” without considering the causes and effects of that progress. These weaknesses in the theory were evident in *Mountain Life and Work*’s era two approach to development, in which the magazine included little content about diversity or gender issues and published speculatively about development and expansion without exploring the causes and effects.

The importance of the magazine as a free space was more evident in the third era, when letters from readers became one of the largest sections of the magazine, serving as a forum or “free space” for people across state lines. Throughout both eras *Mountain Life and Work* exemplified the neopopulist ideas of community-based empowerment and reliance on tradition to develop groundwork for resistance. Fisher draws on Harry C. Boyle’s work regarding neopopulism, or civic populism. Boyle writes that civic populism “points to the strategic importance of organizing for change in areas such as education, health care, or law, where today citizens are largely rendered as passive recipients, not active creators” (“Civic Populism,” 739). Appalachia has long been identified as a region of “passive recipients,” which Fisher describes in a review essay of John Gaventa’s *Power and Powerlessness*. Fisher writes that such ideas “link quiescence directly to the apathetic and fatalistic nature of Appalachian people” (“Power” 142) but that “the quietness typical of central Appalachia’s lower and working classes cannot be taken to reflect an acceptance of fate that may be innate in their ‘culture’” (“Power” 142). His presentation of Appalachian neopopulism offers a



counter to past ideas about Appalachian fatalism and acceptance of a hard lot, and instead suggests that the traditional, community-based values of many Appalachian societies are ideal for activism because “the radicals in the Appalachian mountains...have been those with roots, with something to lose” (*Fighting Back*, 322). Fisher argues that Appalachia became a hub of activism *because* it is a place rooted in tradition, and *Mountain Life and Work’s* gradual shift from “tradition” to “resistance” as its primary focus illustrates Fisher’s idea that community values are the basis of progress.

Fisher’s application of neopopulism to Appalachian Studies will help to ground my thesis within the Appalachian Studies field. Additionally, it provides a framework that enables me to discuss *MLW* as one unified idea, rather than many different magazines, as it is often perceived. I argue that *MLW* changed along with a changing Appalachia, and that its many formats and contents all were designed to best respond to the goals of the editors and the wishes of the audience at one specific point in time. But always, *MLW* was intended to work as “the organ of the Southern mountains,” emphasizing community building and traditional values as sources of empowerment. *MLW* was always concerned with the voice of Appalachia, but over time became less focused on giving voice to the people than being that voice, and free space, itself.

### **Power and Powerlessness in *Mountain Life and Work***

John Gaventa’s essential questions in *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley* are these: why doesn’t rebellion occur when it ought to? What is the nature of power? Gaventa examines power relations in Appalachia through a three-dimensional approach. In the first dimension, power is understood “by looking at who

prevails in bargaining over the resolution of key issues” (Gaventa 14), an approach Stephen Fisher identifies as pluralism (Fisher, “Power,” 143). In the second, a “mobilization of bias,” or a set of values, is added to the equation and “those who benefit are placed in a preferred position to defend and promote their vested interests” (Gaventa 14). Both these dimensions involve a “non-event” meaning no confrontation. The third dimension, which Gaventa describes as “the least developed and least understood mechanisms of power,” involving indirect influences, requiring one to “locate the power processes behind the social construction of meanings and patterns” (Gaventa 15). *Power and Powerlessness* deals most thoroughly with power relations in this third dimension. This approach was groundbreaking because it flew in the face of general assumptions that quiescence was a result of colonialism and traits considered inherent to those in Appalachia, such as fatalism and ignorance. Instead, Gaventa claims that lack of resistance was a result of power relationships and exploitation of non-elites. Gaventa divides his work into the formation, maintenance, and challenging of power relations. This breakdown mirrors my own identification of *MLW*’s eras of education, development, and activism. The era of *MLW* that best aligns with Gaventa’s ideas is era three, which I have identified as the era of activism. His case study about Clear Fork Valley identifies patterns in the challenging of power structures that can be applied to *Mountain Life and Work*’s agenda in the third era.

### **Roadmap for the Thesis**

In Marshall Vaughn’s 1965 *MLW* editorial, he wrote that “the vast majority of the present readers of the magazine do not know why and how it came into existence” (41.2, 1). Over fifty years later, this is still true in Appalachian Studies—many scholars are unfamiliar

with this publication, and those that are familiar, do not know much about it. This thesis is designed to provide an overview of the events and purpose of *MLW* throughout its long publication lifespan. *Mountain Life and Work* can be divided into three clear eras: 1925-1949 (the era of education), 1950-1967 (the era of development), 1968-1988 the era of (activism). These eras are most obviously distinguished by changes in the format of the magazine, but each format change also marks significant shifts in the magazine's content, purpose, creators, and distribution. I have divided this thesis into chapters corresponding to each era. Additionally, there is a supplemental multimedia website that presents primary source images from *MLW* along with a timeline of historical context, as a step towards making the magazine accessible on a multimedia platform ([mountainlifeandwork.weebly.com](http://mountainlifeandwork.weebly.com)).

Each chapter will address these questions:

-What was the predominant theme of *Mountain Life and Work*? In each of these time periods, *Mountain Life and Work* published on a wide variety of topics but overall focused on one predominant issue that set the tone for its agenda. These themes can be broadly described as education (era one), development (era two), and activism (era three).

-How was the rhetorical triangle model emphasized in this era? The rhetorical triangle consists of the relationship between writer, reader, and content, all of which heavily influenced each other in *MLW*. My discussion of the rhetorical triangle is based on Wayne Booth's explanation of rhetorical technique in his article "The Rhetorical Stance," which he describes as "the three elements that are at work in any communicative effort: the available arguments about the subject itself, the interests and peculiarities of the audience, and the voice, the implied character, of the speaker" (141). Of the many iterations of the rhetorical triangle, Booth's explanation most closely aligns with my breakdown of *MLW*. Each specific

era leans more toward one side of this triangle as most prominent—era one was defined by the creator, era two the content, and era three the reader. The rhetorical triangle dates back to Aristotle’s model of ethos, logos, and pathos comprising rhetorical appeal, or an argument embodying an ethical, logical, and emotional approach (Killingsworth 249). All three aspects were present in *Mountain Life and Work*, but shifted in significance as the magazine’s agenda evolved.

Booth’s model closely mirrors Catherine C. Mitchell and C. Joan Schnyder’s approach in their introductory article about *MLW*: “This article examines...the goals of [*MLW*’s] editors, the intended audience and the way in which the magazine’s content reflected those goals and audience” (974). My approach in discussing *Mountain Life and Work* is similar. Each of these three eras emphasizes one side of this triangle more than the others.

-How can theory be applied to this era? In addition to Mitchell and Schnyder’s structural approach, each era is best reflected in discussion of various other theories, as previously described (colonialism, neopopulism, power relations). Other theoretical approaches which are less blanket applicable but still relevant will be discussed, such as Jane Becker’s *Selling Tradition* and Ronald Eller’s *Uneven Ground*. Some eras lend themselves more directly to theoretical approaches than others. The overall structure and thematic division of my argument is most similar to John Gaventa’s *Power and Powerlessness*, in which he breaks down a political theory of Appalachian power relations into a three-phase model, which includes the formation, maintenance, and challenge of power relations. This mirrors my division of *MLW* history into the education, development, and activism phases.

Additionally, each chapter will provide a narrative of the pertaining timeline, drawing on articles from *MLW*, documents from the Council of the Southern Mountains archives, and academic scholarship about the CSM. Throughout this examination I will focus on major points of change in *MLW*. These points of change are usually signified with a change in format, but these changes were not arbitrary and were shaped by many contributing factors that can be determined by studying these three components. Through these methods I will be able to produce an idea as to how *MLW* changed to reflect a changing Appalachia. The story of *Mountain Life and Work* reflects the ways Appalachian Studies and Appalachia itself transformed from institution-based to community-driven, from reform to activism, from being spoken for to speaking out.

## Chapter 2 — The Education Era (1925-1949)

An ad that appeared in the October 1928 issue of *Mountain Life and Work* claimed, in large letters,

NINETEENTH CENTURY IDEAS need no longer CONTROL PEOPLE'S THINKING about conditions in our southern Mountains. Nor need any one's knowledge be limited to those stories, facts and fiction, which circulated so widely during the first and second decades of the twentieth century. One can now learn of the Changes that Have Come in the last seven years, the last three years, the last year. And one can GET THE INFORMATION from a source, which, if not disinterested, is at least not solicitous for any particular organization, institution, or project (*MLW* 4.3, 2).

This advertisement captures the general purpose of the first years of *Mountain Life and Work*. This first “era” of publication I have identified as running from 1925 to 1949, from the first issue until the Council's first disbanding in 1949. This era can be characterized by its focus on education reform and traditional folk culture, the influence of Helen Dingman, a consistent core staff, and a far-reaching readership of educated elite. Most of the issues focused on education reform, education in church systems, or the education of wider populations about the nature of mountain work. Articles were published with titles such as “The Influence of School Environment on the Child” (2.3) and “Three Years In the Foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains as a Smith-Hughes Teacher” (3.1). These articles were written by educated people from outside, urban areas, who ventured deep into the southern

mountains to spread their knowledge and report their experience to other educated elites who might embark on similar reform enterprises. *MLW* frequently published themed issues, with the entire magazine devoted to articles about Health or Rural Public Education. During this era, the bulk of the Appalachian population was not reading *MLW*—its subscribers were predominantly educational administrators, church officials, and other reform-minded individuals, many from outside the mountain area. *Mountain Life and Work* established itself as the first and only voice of Appalachia, essentially forming a power relation between the citizens and the Council.

By far the most influential aspect of the rhetorical triangle on *MLW* during era one was the writer, or “the voice of the speaker” (Booth 141). The “speaker” in the early years of *MLW* encompassed all those who regularly contributed to *MLW* but especially its longtime editor, Helen Hastie Dingman, who became the editor in 1926 and held this position until 1941, when health issues forced her to retire. Penny Messinger writes that under Dingman’s supervision, *MLW* became “a way for mountain workers to maintain contacts beyond the yearly meeting” (“Professionalizing” 224). Essentially, in its early years, *MLW* was not only not read by locals, but not even *intended* to be read by locals. A large portion of *MLW*’s subscribers in these years were academics and reformers in other areas, ensuring that *MLW* “created a powerful image of the region as it was understood and experienced by the mountain workers” (Messinger, “Professionalizing” 224). *MLW*’s goal was to change the national perception of the region, and in the beginning it did this simply by replacing the old negative image with a new, slightly less degrading one.

## Colonialism and Education in Era One

Catherine C. Mitchell and C. Joan Schnyder, writing about the first five years of *MLW*, accuse it of being mired in traditionalism, placing misguided emphasis on the more “attractive” aspects of stereotypes, skewing negative traits towards an emphasis on outdated values and celebrating “ethnic purity” (978). They argue that these tendencies show the writers of *MLW* were attempting to whitewash Appalachia both morally and socially, transforming the region into something they deemed more acceptable through the publication. During these years the magazine was written by a small group of educated people, many of whom were not from the mountains. The editorials published in these years reprimanded the general public for their negative attitudes, saying “the people who inhabit this mountain section are often grossly misunderstood and misrepresented. Like all human beings, they have some imperfections, but their virtues far exceed their vices” (*MLW* 3.3, 1). This same editorial goes on to claim that the mountain people “represent the purest Anglo-Saxon stock now extant anywhere in the United States...Few Negroes or Indians have penetrated these regions,” a statement which corroborates Mitchell & Schnyder’s accusation of whitewashing and promoting ideas of racial “purity.”

This era has often been identified with ideas of colonialism. Helen Matthews Lewis’ work *Colonialism in Modern America: The Appalachian Case* “helped pioneer an alternative discourse on Appalachia as an economically exploited, politically demonized, and culturally denigrated ‘internal colony’” (Banks, Billings, and Tice, 284). Today in Appalachian Studies we might consider arguments about colonialism to be dated, given that so much scholarship about the region has emerged since Lewis’ study. But at the time, this was a new perspective unlike anything presented before. Similarly, *MLW* in its first twenty years was intended to be



a progressive publication, working to dispel colonialist notions and serve as a tool for Appalachian empowerment. But now, compared to the vast amount of work done since then, these early issues of *MLW* seem like instruments of the same colonialism it professed to be fighting.

### **Selling Tradition in Education**

The early issues of *MLW* admonish poor institutions and infrastructure, offer testimonies of educated outsiders who bring resources, and exalt in articles about handicrafts and music. Especially in the 1930s, following Olive Dame Campbell's new ideas about folk schools, *MLW*'s program for education reform began to suggest the inclusion of handicrafts and folk culture in schools, intending to empower mountain residents through their own traditions. Historian Jane S. Becker, in *Selling Tradition: Appalachia and the Construction of an American Folk, 1930-1940*, addresses this tendency to celebrate quaint folk art with little attention paid to authenticity. Becker does not reference *Mountain Life and Work* specifically, but her writing about this decade can be applied to *MLW*'s own treatment of "traditional" folk culture. Becker examines the concepts of "tradition" and "folk" as being commercial constructs promoted during this decade as a response to the Great Depression, a "way of life that did not rely on material wealth" (5). Appalachia especially was at the center of national attention to folk arts, and the rush of folklorists, ballad hunters, and reforms to the mountains perpetuated "the myth that a traditional American culture existed in Southern Appalachia" (Becker 5). Early projects of *MLW* continued to partly inform its agenda well into era two, as it attempted to remain politically neutral and instead exalt in the values of "traditional" life.

### Timeline of Education Era

The era I have identified as the Education Era spanned from 1925 to 1949. This era saw the start of the Great Depression in 1929. Prohibition ended during this era in 1933. *Mountain Life and Work* was in print at the start of World War II. In Appalachia, this era included the 1929 textile strikes in Gastonia, NC, and Elizabethton, TN, as well as the nationwide United Textile Workers strike in 1934. From 1931 to 1939, the Harlan County War or “Bloody Harlan” raged over coal mining in Kentucky. This era saw the development of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA).

At its beginning in 1925, the magazine was not affiliated with the Council of the Southern Mountains, only Berea College. This first issue of *Mountain Life and Work* presents a purpose for the magazine that was changed soon after, but the ideas presented in issue 1.1 are the basis for much of the reasoning that *MLW* was another colonialist reform tool, albeit less severe than previous efforts. By this time, most missionaries and social workers had realized that mountain people’s disadvantages were due to outside factors, not their own inherent characteristics, and reform efforts sought to change social systems rather than people.

The first issue includes the article “Purpose of Mountain Life and Work” by the president of Berea, Dr. William J. Hutchins. In this article he stated that “the mountains need constant re-interpretation to themselves and to the world” and wrote about the ways in which *MLW* would contribute to solving “the mountain problem” (*MLW* 1.1, 1). Here he addressed the general intent of early *MLW*, which was to change the ways that America perceived Appalachia, as well as the ways Appalachians perceived themselves. The magazine’s first editor Marshall E. Vaughn expanded on the so-called “mountain problem” in his article

“Purpose of This Magazine,” which Lewis, Mitchell, et al., treated as the purpose of the magazine for its entirety. In this article Vaughn explained that “interest in the mountains heretofore has been largely of the patronizing kind” (*MLW* 1.1 2) and that *MLW* was taking a different approach:

To reach a true understanding of the real mountaineer will require a modification of many concepts about his life and habits that have been built up around him. Not only is it necessary to change the thinking of the outside world regarding him, but he must be brought to a different understanding of himself. (*MLW* 1.1 2)

The first issue also introduced the “Program for the Mountains,” which Helen Lewis likened to a kind of manifest destiny (118). This editorial addressed ways to reform schools, churches, agriculture, health systems, and highways, as well as community organizations and even “wise use of leisure time” (*MLW* 1.1 20-21). This editorial claims, “we are not a peculiar people in any very significant sense, but we do have peculiar problems” (*MLW* 1.1 20), going on to list those systems previously mentioned. This clearly outlines the perspective that infrastructure, not character traits, was the focus of these reforms—a progressive approach compared to earlier colonialist strategies, but from a more modern standpoint, still in the same vein.

It is notable that this editorial was written by “We,” as though the writers were the same people benefitting from proposed changes, when they were not. This same issue includes a section introducing all contributing editors: J.N.O Tigert, Helen H. Dingman, Olive Dame Campbell, Edmund De Schweintiz Brunner, W. O. Sanders, Marshall E. Vaughn,

John Preston McConnell, and Eugene C. Branson, only half of whom even lived in the mountains. Most of these contributors disappeared from the magazine within a few years. Marshall Vaughn was editor for only the initial year, and Helen Dingman took the job in 1926. By 1930, she and Olive Campbell were the only members of this original group who were consistently affiliated with *MLW*.

Penny Messinger discusses these two women in detail, especially Helen Dingman, in various scholarship (listed in Works Cited). Messinger addresses this era of *MLW* specifically in her master's thesis, examining the magazine's presentation of women from 1925 to 1934. "The first nine years of the magazine witnessed the creation and acceptance of the models of "mountain woman" and "mountain worker" (*Children* 4). Messinger asserts that the way *MLW* wrote about "women" and "women workers" were different—the average mountain woman discussed in *MLW* was associated with her family members and was domestic, but women *workers* were single, active advocates for education and social reform (*Children* 4). As in traditional colonialism, these reformers—who claimed to be authentic mountain people—were a step above those they intended to "fix," a liberal elite class of people out of touch with the actualities of real mountain life and work. In Vaughn's words, a "new era" of thinking about the mountains was about to be brought "by way of self-development rather than by way of conquest" (*MLW* 1.1 3). These editors may not have been planning conquest, but their Program for the Mountains was still a step away from "self-development."

For the first three years, *MLW* published issues that each focused on a different issue in need of help: rural education, health, agriculture, the church. Articles usually were written from the point of view of an educated outsider coming into a rural town, marveling at the

primitive way of life he saw there, and blessing the residents with modern knowledge to improve their lives. Though intended to be progressive, these articles often evoke the “manifest destiny” suggestion that Lewis describes.

*Mountain Life and Work* did not quickly grow an audience. In its second issue, the opening editorial made it clear that “our advertising will be quite largely limited to educational institutions” (*MLW* 1.2 1). Although not affiliated with the Council (then the Council of Southern Mountain Workers), *MLW* began publishing its annual conference proceedings in 1926. This conference helped the magazine gain an audience, though this audience was mainly administrators from other like-minded organizations and individuals. Not only was *MLW* not read by the public, it was not *intended* to be read by the public at this point.

In 1928, Dr. Hutchins declared *MLW* “a success” after only three years of largely hands-off involvement. Hutchins said *MLW* had “forced all mountain workers to face their problems in the light of swiftly changing conditions, and ha[s] served as well to adjust the minds of many people of the plains to the less romantic and colorful, but equally urgent present needs of the mountains” (Mitchell and Schnyder 977). “Mountain workers” here, and in *MLW*’s early issues, does not refer to those citizens actually living and working in the mountains—as noted, the general population was not reading *MLW* and subscribers were mostly from outside Appalachia. “Mountain workers” refers to those social workers working on reform issues in the mountains. *MLW*’s articles and ads suggested that most citizens in Appalachia remained ignorant to their problems.

Once Hutchins declared it “a success,” he decided he did not need to concern himself with *MLW* anymore. The magazine was transferred over to the Council. Helen Dingman,

who had been editing *MLW* for two years, was the executive secretary of the Council and in 1928 began advertising the magazine as the “official organ” of the Council (Messinger, “Professionalizing” 224). Helen Dingman and Luther Ambrose, *MLW*’s business manager, solicited aggressively for subscribers and wrote personalized letters that they sent to various people and organizations. They kept lists of schools, churches, “independent centers,” and even radio stations across the country, to whom they would send complimentary copies of *MLW* along with a personalized letter. These letters catered to the interests of the reader, highlighting sections of *MLW* they might find appealing. Many of these letters still exist in the Council archives, and while some of them are personalized, many are finished “form” letters with no addressee, date or signature—but still written as though intended for a specific person. Examples include:

It is a real disappointment to return to the office after my summer vacation and find that you have not renewed your subscription to Mountain Life and Work. (CSM Papers, 8.260.9)

A friend of yours has informed us that you are keenly interested in the progress and achievements of this section of the country and feels that our magazine “*MLW*” would help to bring you in closer touch with the life and changing conditions of our Southern mountains. (CSM Papers, 8.260.9)

Many of the existing letters that are addressed were sent to people in Ohio, Michigan, Iowa, Missouri, and even Utah, Idaho, and further west. There were few regional subscribers, and

these were limited to church and school officials, though by 1929 newspapers and libraries were added to subscription lists, showing that the *MLW* message was gradually reaching the general population.

*MLW* still kept returning to the question of “Is There A Mountain Problem?” (*MLW* 4.2 5) but, under the direction of Helen Dingman and the Council, the perceived problem began to be addressed with less supercilious tactics. Rather than targeting education to “fix” faults, *MLW* began to advocate for changing the curriculum by highlighting strengths, in this case, handicrafts and traditional “folk” education. Further exploration should be done as to how much of an influence *MLW* actually had, but it is clear that around 1930 the education reform articles focused less on what needed to be changed/solved and more on what could be added and emphasized. In 1929, the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild was officially formed at the CSM conference. Then an article in the July 1930 issue, “The Mountain Handicrafts: Their Importance to the Country and to the People in the Mountain Homes” kickstarted a focus on handicrafts and folk tradition.

Penny Messinger points out that this new focus on culture, promoted especially by Margeurite Butler (a “culture worker”) and Olive Campbell, highlighted “a particular brand of culture that was often at odds with indigenous traditions” (*Children* 55) and that this publicized folk culture was more a result of settlement schools such as the John C. Campbell Folk School, Olive Campbell’s project. This new direction in education especially highlighted “folk” culture and education. Throughout *MLW*, but especially in era one, the magazine “promoted handicrafts as a way of fostering cultures, reclaiming human relations, and forwarding self-sufficiency” (Green *Poetry* 131). Many of its articles at this time were explorations of education at the John C. Campbell Folk School and similar organizations,

spotlights of artisans, or testimonies from contributors (usually educated) about their experience observing or learning handicrafts from locals. Becker argues that this perspective placed too much focus on the past, and that lauding Appalachia as being traditional “obscures the conflicts and alternatives posed by the contact of disparate contemporary cultures...this paradigm asserts a scientific and moral authority that portrays alien cultures as reacting to the new order rather than actively producing change and suggests that their significance lies in the past rather than in the present” (10). Though this approach was markedly different from the Council’s past educational endeavors, and at its heart was progressive, it did not do as much good as intended.

Even as *MLW* turned its attention away from strict educational principles as basis of reform, this initial idea did not go away. Articles continued to be published about “The Retardation of the Appalachian Region” (*MLW* 5.1 21) and proposed ways to change schools, churches, and other institutions. But as the United States began to veer toward an economic crisis in 1930, the focus of *MLW*’s reform coverage shifted from rural people to people living in more industrial centers located in the mountains (Messinger, *Children* 25). Messinger points out that people living in these urban areas were not traditionally referred to as “mountain people.” This expanded focus was largely the influence of editor Helen Dingman.

Helen High Dingman was editor of *MLW* from 1926 to 1942—almost the entire span of era one, and she shaped the magazine’s focus more than any other staff member at this time. In the early 1930s, the magazine began to turn its focus toward poor people in coal fields and industrial centers when Dingman, as executive secretary of CSM, “saw the need for an expanded role for the CSMW and worked to achieve various reform goals in her



capacity as Executive Secretary of the CSMW and through her own work” (Messinger, *Children* 31). According to Messinger, Helen Dingman organized a meeting of agencies both inside and outside the mountains to conduct a comprehensive economic and social survey of the Appalachian region. This became the 1935 survey “Economic and Social Problems and Conditions of the Southern Appalachians,” which remained a standard in the field for many years (Messinger, *Children* 32). Lists from this process remain in the CSM articles including Directory of Constituent Organizations from Home Missions Council- a giant directory of churches and their officials, all of whom were solicited. For the first 10 years, *MLW*’s audience was primarily teachers, libraries, churches, and groups within these organizations, no specific mountain focus (CSM Papers, 8.260.9)

Dingman’s tenure as both executive secretary and editor of *MLW* was marked by her desire to always be “doing.” Writes Messinger, “As a missionary worker, a teacher, and an administrator...As an observer of life in the region, Dingman saw a need for her intervention and tried to help to improve conditions in the region. Many other mountain workers would follow her example” (*Children* 33). During this time, Olive Dame Campbell was also a major influence, and contributed articles to most of the issues. Messinger’s thesis goes into detail about Campbell’s impact on the magazine as well. These two women and their work for *MLW* made this the era of the publication most influenced by women. The magazine’s spotlight on handicrafts resulted in many articles, always by women. Never again in its 63 years were so many women involved in the production of *MLW*.

*Mountain Life and Work*’s shift in focus from religious programming to folk traditions led to a rise in songs, fiction, and poetry in the magazine. In 1928, book reviews were introduced. In the early 1930s, writers such as Jesse Stuart and Don West began to be

featured in *MLW*, writing short poems and stories. Each issue began with a poem, often by one of the regular contributors. Popular poet Don West was blacklisted from *MLW* when he was arrested but continued to write for the magazine under a fake name, even though he referred to *MLW* as “that reactionary sheet” catering to “old maids at Hindman [settlement school]” (Green, *Poetry* 158). James Still, a notable Appalachian writer, first published in *MLW* in October 1935— a poem called “Dulcimer.” Still went on to be a regular contributor to *MLW*, publishing a poem in nearly every issue from 1935 until 1944. In 1940 Still joined the *MLW* editorial board. Into the mid-1930s *MLW* relentlessly wondered “Is There a Mountain Problem?” (*MLW* 4.2, 5) and spoke of “The Retardation of the Appalachian Mountains” (*MLW* 5.20) but in addition to handicrafts, literature, book reviews, turned its focus toward more concrete developments in infrastructure such as the TVA.

David Whisnant points out that, while focusing on these aspects of mountain life, *MLW* blatantly ignored other prominent issues occurring in the mountains such as the growing problems brought by industrialization (textiles, coal, lumber). He writes that the churches “declined to take note” of these issues, and the conference (and therefore *MLW*) followed suit, deciding to “remain above the controversy” (*Modernizing* 10). Labor unions were often mentioned in passing in *MLW*, but the publication or its sponsoring organization never formed alliances with them (Whisnant, *Modernizing* 11).

At the 1939 Conference of the Southern Mountain Workers in Knoxville, Tennessee, Elizabeth Barnes (a representative of *MLW*) handed out surveys to participants, to gauge attendees’ opinions about *MLW*. The survey asked respondents to vote for or against the continuance of *MLW*, and give reasons. A summary of answers in the CSM Papers reports that, of seventy-nine responses, seventy voted for continuing publication and nine did not

vote. Of these nine, two were indifferent, two didn't know what to advise, and one was not a subscriber but said "it looks good to me" (CSM Papers 8.263.9). The most common reasons given for continuance were:

"Value to workers in the mountains"

"Reliable information to those on the outside"

"Important to have journal representing the mountains"

"Interprets character and culture of mountain people" (CSM 8.263.9)

Included with this summary are many other testimonies in favor of *MLW*. Several express a desire to "see *MLW* in more of the homes" in mountain areas, suggesting the scope of *MLW* may be expanded to reach the public. Most of these responses referenced "mountain work" with statements such as "It treats subjects vitally important to all who are trying to help solve the mountain problems in a most helpful way" or "We are continuously thinking of our work in common terms and constantly need an organ of expression" (CSM Papers 8.263.9). Most of these included references to "developing" and "helping," so it is clear that even though people were beginning to see that *MLW* could be beneficial to the people, for the most part it remained geared towards a specific, reform-minded audience with a narrow goal of increasing awareness of developmental efforts by private and public organizations.

This survey sparked a renewed push toward building an audience. In 1939 an editorial titled "Food for Thought" was published, in which the survey results were detailed and, in celebration of *MLW*'s fifteenth birthday, its original mission was re-printed:

The hope was that the Southern Mountains, ‘poorly understood and insufficiently appreciated,’ might, through the medium of this quarterly, become understood in a sympathetic rather than a patronizing way, and that, while changing the thinking of the outside world in regard to the mountain people, it might also bring them to a better understanding of that world...Every educator and social service promoter who has had much experience in the mountains in recent years has felt or is feeling the need of such a medium (15.1, 1)

In 1940 Helen Dingman sent out more pleas for fundraising and subscription, again “personalized” to then-undecided recipients. She writes, “Mountain Life and Work is not just another magazine but it is also a symbol of the cooperative spirit which has grown in our mountain work” (CSM papers, 8.260.9). A memo to Dingman in the archives, dated February 1940, from an Abigail Hoffsommer, suggests that if *MLW* were to be continued, “special subscription rates be offered to high school and college seniors throughout the area” (CSM Papers, 8.259.7). Though teachers comprised the bulk of *MLW*’s subscription base, there is no evidence that students were subscribing individually. This suggestion is the first indication that *students* may be interested reading *MLW*, rather than just teachers.

Despite this renewed effort to build an audience and reach people beyond its usual scope, *MLW* began to struggle in the early 1940s. Due to health reasons, Helen Dingman resigned as editor at the end of 1941, and for some years *MLW* was unable to find a permanent replacement with the same capability. Only one issue was published in volume 19, labeled “Winter 1942-43” a notable departure from its strict quarterly publication. Alva

W. Taylor was acting as the editor. Taylor agreed to serve as secretary of the CSM for two years but kept the position for three (Messinger “Professionalizing” 232). Taylor brought “new vitality” to *MLW* which it had been lacking, but according to Whisnant, “chafed” under the direction of Berea (*Modernizing* 17). Not much material exists about this period in the archives, but it can be assumed that this era, which had been defined by its editor/creator above all else, was coming to a close while *MLW* struggled to find leadership. Coupled with financial worries, these last few years of *MLW*’s era one are inconsistent in formatting, staff, and appearance.

A letter from Marshall E. Vaughn, still a contributing editor, written in October 1942 to Berea’s President Hutchins, admits that the *MLW* publishing office was running low on resources and suggests condensing *MLW* records: “The quarterly will not make any greater progress by ignoring the people who made it than it will by dropping their names from its records.” Handwritten note on bottom—“Paper is scarce so we use whatever kind of sheet that is handy” (CSM Papers, 8.259.2). Financial records from 1937 to 1943 show a marked decline in subscriptions. However, in 1944 the Council officially changed its name to “Council of the Southern Mountain Workers” and advertised *MLW* with renewed vigor, in the face of financial difficulties. Archival letters by Alva W. Taylor advertise *MLW* by saying “the last issue of this magazine is sixty pages, illustrated. It is the biggest, and many are writing us, the best ever issued” (CSM Papers, 8.259.7). In 1945 Alva W. Taylor had completed his extended three years as executive secretary, and during the entirety of this year the Council had no secretary. Eugene J. Coltrane served as editor of *MLW* for the first volume, and Orrin L Keener for the second.

In 1946 Glyn A. Morris became the full-time director of the Council but resigned after only one year (Messinger, “Professionalizing” 232). He, like others before him, had difficulty keeping *MLW* afloat along with the Council. To boost subscriptions, Morris sent letters to the Council’s entire address book asking for “a complete list of all private schools, centers, hospitals, no matter how small, within your county, together with addresses and denominations, if that is possible.” Morris asked superintendents of schools, but many responded saying there were no private schools, centers, or hospitals in their county—this happened in several Kentucky counties, Cumberland, Greenup, Jackson County, and Johnson (CSM Papers, 8.260.11).

In 1947 Alice Cobb assumed the role of “acting” editor for three issues, then this job was taken by Florence Goodell. Penny Messinger writes about Florence Goodell’s work in detail, saying that she “kept the program operating...when financial catastrophe struck” (Messinger “Professionalizing” 232). Between 1945 and 1951, the Council and therefore *MLW* struggled to stay intact, and Goodell was the constant driving force behind its survival. Goodell edited *MLW* until 1949, when the Council lost funding from Russell Sage. Only one issue of *MLW* was published in 1949. In this year, after the loss of funding, the Council cut off its program, closed the Berea office, and moved to Asheville to merge with the Southern Highlands Handicraft Guild. This abrupt end of the Council functions, following a rapid decline in money and leadership capability, marked the end of the first era of *MLW*, but within two years the Council and *MLW* would be up and running again, back in Berea, but with a new staff, a new look, and a new mission.

## To conclude

This era saw the formation of *MLW* and its initial purpose—education reform, as well as a general education of the American public about the *real* story in the mountains. *MLW* established itself as the primary “voice of” Appalachian people, while actually implementing reform tactics considered similar to those that came before, despite the magazine’s insistence that it was ushering in a new era. The era is characterized by the clear divide between educated elite “mountain worker” and the general population. The general population did not read the magazine, nor were they really *supposed* to—throughout era one, *MLW* was geared specifically towards other workers with the intent to help the people. Helen Dingman’s tenure as editor shone out as the primary influence over the magazine—it was she who decided the content and marketed *MLW* to such a specific audience that she essentially hand-picked its subscribers. In addition to Dingman, era one can be remembered for its new approach to thinking about mountain people in mountain life, which set *Mountain Life and Work* on its path to become the future voice of the people.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For more extensive information about Helen Hastie Dingman and folk revival, see Messinger and Becker (Works Cited). For more extensive information about the Conference/council’s work (less pertaining to *MLW*) during this time, see Whisnant. Whisnant takes a more critical approach to these early years of the Council, but his history of CSM offers a thorough supplement to the information given here.

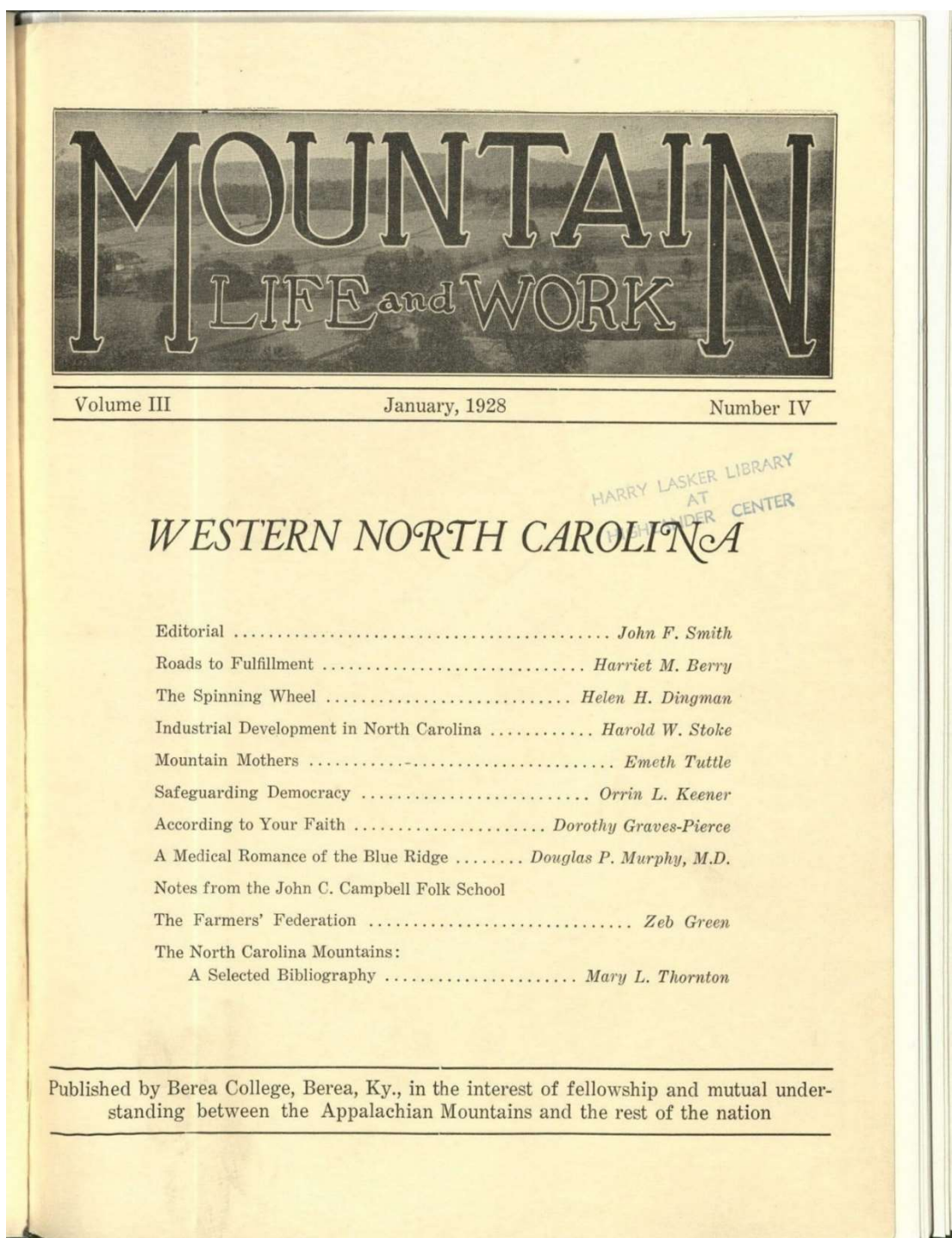


Figure 1. Sample format of *Mountain Life and Work* during era one.



### Chapter 3- The Development Era (1950-1967)

After Helen Dingman's 1941 retirement, *Mountain Life and Work* saw a rapid decline in production and consistency, following along with the Council's financial struggle and collapse. In 1949 the Council's funding from the Russell Sage Foundation was discontinued. It officially closed its Berea office and was forced to publish only one issue of *MLW*. This seemed like the end of its run, but just two years later, under the direction and fundraising of Perley Ayer, the Council was awarded funds from the Ford Foundation. It was rebooted, restored to its Berea office, and began a new era distinctly different from the first, which is evident in the pages of *Mountain Life and Work*. This era of *MLW* is characterized especially by *MLW*'s focus on urban initiatives and Appalachian outmigration, the first inclusion of third-party advertisements, the influence of Perley Ayer, and a gradual expansion in number of contributors and subscribers.

This second era of *Mountain Life and Work* is most evident in its change in format. In the 1975 fiftieth anniversary issue, articles reminiscing on past years of *MLW* described the 1950 format as "reduced to a 5½" x 8½" pamphlet style" (*MLW* 51.2, 3), half its original size. A letter from Ayer to Mr. Donald Wing, from March 1950, states "after a year it has been desided [sic] to revive the quarterly in a less expensive form" (CSM Papers 8.260.11). This less expensive form and less aesthetic, more practical appearance helped to emphasize its new focus on straightforward matters, usually concerning development and the side effects of that development.

Many other changes came with this production shift to mark this clearly distinct second "era" of *MLW*. This is the shortest era and the most difficult to characterize. The 1975 anniversary article claims that *MLW* in the decade from 1950 to 1960 was devoted to

recreation (*MLW* 51.2, 3), but I have identified this era as the era of *development*, due to *MLW*'s focus on industry, urban Appalachian issues, and expanding its influence to a wider audience. David Whisnant describes this era as "the most turbulent period in the [Council's] history" (*Modernizing* 18), but *Mountain Life and Work* displayed little evidence of this turbulence. However, the turbulence is subtly apparent in the magazine's wide variety of contents which can be seen to indicate the Council's attempts at doing "too much." *MLW* was attempting to continue its era one "folksy" tone while moving toward activism, yet trying to remain nonpolitical. These conflicting agendas, all vying for prevalence in the magazine, reflect the Council's similar attempt to keep up with multiple missions. At times, the incongruous contents of *MLW* could be described as hurried or unorganized, showing that the Council may have been struggling to keep up with publication in the midst of its many other activities. Unlike eras one and three, there is no major theoretical perspective that fits like a stencil onto this era, and not much scholarship exists about it, though much information can be found about the Council at this time.

According to Phillip Obermiller, during this period the Council was "deeply involved in the issues surrounding outmigration from the region" (6), focusing more than ever on initiatives in urban Appalachia. This was primarily due to Perley Ayer's agenda. Ayer was teaching sociology at Berea College at the time, and the Council board chose him to become the executive director of CSM and *MLW* in 1951. Perley Ayer focused energy into Council fundraising and within a few years had nearly tripled the Council's budget and obtained grant money, leading to the numerous urban Appalachian partnership programs and workshops that the Council facilitated during this era (these were only mentioned in passing in *MLW*).

Obermiller asserts that the Council's urban work is "often overlooked in discussions about its role in the history of Appalachia" (5), but in this particular era, such matters were at the top of the Council's agenda and this orientation appears in the content of *MLW* as well, marking these seventeen years as the era of development. The theme of development manifests in several ways. Articles in *MLW* addressed industrial development and urban development, as well as the consequences of this development, such as issues of strip mining. But also, the large number of advertisements for companies like Lily Mills, a textile manufacturer, indicated that development was an underlying influence of *MLW* and Appalachian life at this time. The magazine itself was actively working to develop its staff by creating new positions such as staff photographers and staff artists. Archival subscription lists show that its audience was expanding, and so was its position as a prominent voice in the mountains. More people were added to the publications committee, more contributors wrote for the magazine, and more people subscribed. This was a kind of "transition period" when the Council and *MLW* rebuilt after the collapse of 1949 and re-developed its readership and membership.

Using the rhetorical triangle model [Booth's subject/audience/speaker (5)], if era one was most defined by its creator (notably Helen Dingman), then era two highlighted *content*. During the years 1950 to 1967, *MLW* published articles about a wider span of topics than in any other era, and due to financial constraints, the magazine focused on quality content to make up for its cheaper, less appealing appearance. In a letter draft found in the CSM papers from the early 1960s, Perley Ayer describes *MLW* as the "house journal" of mountain workers, writing of its wide variety of content,

In addition to publishing good regional literature and reviewing related books, it carries results of research on mountain problems and current information on various programs in effect there, gathered and edited by an experienced staff devoting time to firsthand observation and contact....It has been the only journal to report, throughout the years, significant regional activities and trends. In short, it brings you concisely and regularly, the important developments in the whole southern Appalachian field. (CSM Papers, 8.259.2)

David Whisnant describes the contents of this era more scathingly as “a collage of advertisements for weaving yarn, romantic stories by Jesse Stuart, songs and dances, and reports on conventional social-service projects” (18). Though this era of *MLW* published more “frivolous” content than it had before, and would later, this era shows the widest variety of content in the magazine and was the era that included the most comprehensive material about *all* aspects of “mountain life and work.”

Following John Gaventa’s description of the dynamics of power relations, this second era of *MLW* aligns with his second step, the maintenance of power relations. After its financial troubles in the late 1940s, the 1950s for the Council were a decade of “muddling through”—securing funding, finding staff, and attempting to maintain its position as a primary voice of change in Appalachia. Under Perley Ayer’s direction, *MLW* content kept a politically neutral stance on current issues throughout this era, even as Council members began to call for more activist leanings. The “maintenance” of this era was evident in the way *MLW* strove to preserve its past role as an objective “interpreter” for the mountains that shied away from bold opinions and instead focused on more generally pleasing and domestic

content. While the Council endured a “turbulent” era, this was not evident explicitly in the pages of *Mountain Life and Work*. The magazine attempted to present an image of mountain life and work as steadfast and unchanging, though its gradual embrace of subjects such as strip mining subtly indicated the changes to come. Stephen L. Fisher’s discussion of neopopulism pertaining to Appalachia, though most clearly relevant to the later activism-based era, is also applicable to era two due to its focus on “historical memory and a reliance on and defense of traditional values—a strong commitment to land and family, an emphasis on self-rule and social equality, and patriotism” (*Fighting Back* 320). These topics had been significant in era one and continued to be prominent in *Mountain Life and Work* in era two, despite Council members’ growing concerns about the relevance of *MLW* content. But by continuing to focus on and stress the importance of traditional values, *MLW* developed a wide devoted audience during the development era, an audience that may have been more averse to more political content. The readership for *MLW* only grew with time. A further critique of neopopulism “suggest[s] that the new populists’ notion of community romanticizes traditional community institutions of the past” (Fisher *Fighting Back* 323) and this could be applied to *MLW*. Often, since the Council and therefore *MLW* were adamant about maintaining political neutrality, *MLW* content reflected the values of era one more than it addressed change.

Ronald D. Eller’s book *Uneven Ground: Appalachia Since 1945* is also applicable to this time in *MLW*’s life. Eller’s book explores how industrial development and government programs post-1945—programs intended to continue modernization and economic stimulus in the mountains—actually left the region even more dependent on external instead of internal power structures than before. This is reflected in the content of *MLW*. During this

era, *Mountain Life and Work* frequently focused on development and embraced industry, while simultaneously addressing problems that were side-effects of industry, and this focus eventually led to a schism in the Council and total revamp of its mission and *MLW* publication. Eller's book is a valuable source of further information about industrial development in Appalachia during this second era of *MLW* and provides supplementary information about the Council. While the theory he presents does not apply directly to the focus of *MLW*, Eller's assertion that "empowering" industrial enterprises were more harmful than beneficial puts the increasingly political content of *MLW* into perspective. At the beginning of this era, *MLW* advertised Lily Mills and praised the benefits, such as jobs and electricity, brought to Appalachia by new factories. After a long period of stubborn political neutrality, *MLW* began to veer away from neutrality toward activism [the other direction] and publish articles professing rebuttals to the status quo in the early 1950s. Throughout all this, *MLW* in era two consistently dealt with development and strove to develop its own scope by advertising, soliciting for contributions, and continuing to publish on a wide variety of topics to cater to a wide variety of reader demographics.

### **Timeline of the Development Era**

The Development Era spanned from 1951 to 1967, a time of vast change in Appalachia and America. This era saw the Civil Rights movement and the "Red Scare." President John F. Kennedy was assassinated during this era, in 1963, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ended segregation. This era saw the Beat generation and then the free love/hippie movement, the Korean war and the start of the Vietnam war. In Appalachia, President

Lyndon B. Johnson declared a “war on poverty” in 1964 and the Appalachian Regional Commission was established in 1965.

In 1951, after six years of little to no consistent leadership, Florence Goodell resigned as acting secretary of the Council and Perley Ayer took over, ushering in another “new era” for the Council (Obermiller & Wagner 6). This era’s focus on development and urban outmigration was largely Perley Ayer’s idea, inspired by the Ford Foundation’s “Great Cities Gray Areas Program.” Later, the Ford Foundation itself would fund much of the Council’s work while Perley Ayer was director (Obermiller & Wagner 7). With Ford funding, the Council aimed to “show cities north of the Ohio River precisely what sort of background produced their migrant problems” (Obermiller & Wagner 8). During this year, the Council’s Berea College office reopened, and business as usual resumed. At the start of this era in 1950, the magazine was under managing editorship of Charles Drake, about whom very little can be found in the archives. Drake was at the office only part-time, wrote almost no editorials and, for the most part, stayed out of the magazine politics. For the first four or five years of this era, *MLW* operated under a program of maintenance. Olive Dame Campbell died in June 1954. *MLW* published a memorial issue, put together by Edith Canterbury and Helen Dingman (the retired longtime editor). In 1955, staff member Billy Ed Wheeler was selected by Charles Drake to edit for one year while Drake was in Denmark. Wheeler also worked for Wilderness Road, a Berea-based outdoor theater, and did six-month Ohio tour as a singing minstrel representing Berea. Ultimately, Wheeler was too busy to edit *MLW*, so a year later, in March 1956, he asked the magazine to find a new managing editor until Charles Drake returned (CSM Papers, 8.259.3).

One of the few times Charles Drake wrote for the magazine was to introduce Wheeler. In this article Drake wrote his own editorial philosophy for *MLW*: “We believe that our way of life in the Southern Mountains is both interesting and valuable, and that it deserves to be written about...It is our hope that this magazine both interprets the region to those outside it and serves as a vehicle for bringing new concepts and ideas to the area” (*MLW* 31.2, 46). In this same editorial, a “handwritten” postscript by Drake appears at the end, reading “We still need more subscribers and new advertisers. If each of you would get just one additional member for the Council, we would be able to enlarge the scope and worth of the magazine immensely” (*MLW* 31.2, 46). This postscript clearly indicates *MLW*’s goal of developing its subscription base, content, and the affiliated Council.

Following Drake’s appeal to readers, *MLW* began to overtly target readers for both contributions and funds. In the previous era, the editors did plenty of this but kept the soliciting to private correspondence. Now, pleas to readers were printed on the magazine’s pages, as well as sought through private letters. In the late 1950s, there is evidence that *MLW* solicited for outside contributions more than ever before. Katherine T. Ayer (Perley Ayer’s wife) and Dorothy Green wrote many letters to past contributors as well as random subscribers. This shows that *MLW* was beginning to widen its scope both in writer and audience—in the previous era, articles were always published by a set list of contributors. These show how both development and maintenance ideas were central to keeping *MLW* afloat.

One way that *MLW* began to expand the scope of its writing was with the “Mountain Youth” section, introduced in the Autumn 1957 issue. Prominent Appalachian writers such as Jim Wayne Miller and Gurney Norman published some of their first work in this section. It



featured writing such as short stories, articles, news, poetry, photographs and “folk material of all kinds” (*MLW* 34.1, 42). It was advertised in the pages of *MLW* with phrases like “TO: All young people in the Appalachian South...The pages of MOUNTAIN YOUTH are open to you right now...It is up to you to make this part of our magazine a real expression of your way of life” (*MLW* 34.1, 42). This is another example of *MLW*’s approach to developing its audience and catering to the real citizens of the mountains. It was gradually focusing more and more on a “real expression” of a contemporary mountain way of life, rather than the old, described variously as “white-washed” and “quaint.” At this time the magazine began to include photographs and short biographies of the contributors in each issue, demonstrating a previously absent attempt to build community within the publication.

Another example of *MLW*’s movement towards inclusion and acknowledgment of real issues in the real community was its defined effort at this time to develop the scope of its content. *Content*, more than writer or reader, defined these years. During era two, *MLW* expanded its content to cater to audiences at all levels of education. A letter in the archives from Katherine T. Ayer to Mr. Earl Shaub, the editor of the *Tennessee Conservationist*, solicits materials at a “fourth grade reading level” for the “slow adult reader. So far as we know this has not been done. When you are faced with the fact that 30% of our first graders in the mountain counties drop out of school before the fifth grade, it seems that there ought to be something besides comic books within their reading range” (CSM Papers 8.259.6). At the other end of this spectrum, *MLW* was taking steps toward publishing academic scholarship about Appalachia—one of the first indications that Appalachian Studies was to develop as a scholarly discipline. An article in a 1958 issue titled “The Appalachian Scholar” claimed,

It is in response to [the] growing interest in Appalachian scholarship that *Mountain Life and Work* proposes to add to each issue a special supplement comprised of articles and news of a scholarly nature.... We are convinced that by providing an outlet for serious research we will increase the amount of that research and thus deepen the understanding of our region. (*MLW* 34.3, 21)

Richard Drake and Frank L. Wray, both history professors at Berea, proposed this new scholarship feature to Perley Ayer in a letter written January 1958, outlining their visions for this section, stressing that the scholarship should be “neither glowing romantic idealizations of mountain life nor irresponsible tirades...The articles need not be abstruse nor dry-as-dust. Personally, I would favor those articles which present the fruit of sound scholarship in language which the non-specialist can understand” (CSM Papers, 8.259.7). As a magazine which had previously only catered to the education specialist, this was a great step in developing a wide readership.

*Mountain Life and Work*'s effort to expand the scope of its contributors led to a special relationship between the magazine and social worker Mary Blackburn Wright, to whom more requests in the archive are addressed than any other writer. In 1960, a letter addressed to Wright from Robert F. Connor reads, “This is your opportunity to speak for your area, to contribute to a better understanding of a region about which some of the best educated people are totally ignorant” (CSM Papers, 8.259.3) A later letter to Wright indicates that *MLW*, despite its professed hardline political neutrality, was beginning to realize the need for more directly addressing issues and *solutions* in Appalachia. Connor writes,

I regret very much that we are over-stocked with poems. SO many writers are poets! What we do need are more essays on conditions in the isolated sections of the mountains today—I know so many of the people are living in stark poverty and one wonders how they ever manage to survive. This is the kind of information that can be gotten only from one living close to these conditions, but the great difficulty is finding someone so situated who can also *write*. (CSM Papers, 8.259.5)

A few weeks later, a third letter to Wright reads, “You have come through as expected, with just the right type of article. Of course, everything you do, literarily, is all Wright with us. (Oops!) In wrighting [sic] you can do no rong [sic]. Really, the article is fine” (CSM Papers, 8.259.5). After this, Mary Blackburn Wright was a frequent contributor to *MLW* until 1965.

In previous years, *Mountain Life and Work* had hinted at political leanings in issues concerning industry, such as a feature on the back cover of a Spring 1955 issue, with two photographs of forests, one thriving and one dead. The caption reads, “Which Shall It Be?...Growing timber, holding soil and moisture, giving the promise that our children’s children will have the blessing of fine lumber for school and church and home....OR THIS...wasted trees, gullied land, with all beauty gone, and no hope for the day beyond tomorrow” (*MLW* 31.32, 5). This particular feature did not go into detail about the sides of the issue, and this brief foray into stating an opinion was the most political that *MLW* was willing to be for many years. In 1963, *Mountain Life and Work* published one of its first editorials in this era which thoroughly addressed a real *problem* in the mountains—strip mining—but very firmly claimed the Council had no political leanings, saying “it is essential that the CSM be seen not as a political power...CSM is not interested nor willing to carry on

political fights...Being absolutely NON-POLITICAL provides the CSM a broad base of operations” (quoted in Whisnant 19). This stance would change, and growing exasperation with *MLW*’s neutrality would eventually lead to the Council’s conflict that defined the shift into *MLW*’s final era.

Around this time (circa 1965), *MLW* began to advertise some of the Council’s new initiatives, including the Chicago Southern Center and the Appalachian Volunteers, or as Whisnant describes them “programs that satisfied no one” (21). Whisnant argues that because of the Council’s stubborn political neutrality, no one benefited from the programs, neither the donors nor those they intended to help. Nonetheless, these were steps toward *MLW* becoming a politically minded publication, moving away from the “old Council.” In David Whisnant’s words, the old Council’s weaknesses were a

tendency to romanticize the conservative and picturesque aspects of folk culture; to overlook the dysfunctional effects of industrialization; to identify mountain people’s interests with a national self-interest that resulted in their exploitation; to remain neutral when neutrality was impossible; to cooperate and react rather than initiate and act; to ally itself with conservative and paternalistic “helping” agencies and strategies; to focus on symptoms and rely on nostrums, rather than identify causes and press for structural reform; to remain comfortably inside restrictive ideological boundaries.

(32)

In 1964, Thomas Parrish became the editor of *Mountain Life and Work*. Parrish was the Council’s Director of Special Publications, a position created with the Ford Foundation grant

that allowed the CSM to re-start in 1951. In an editorial in the fall issue, then-editor Mace Crandall wrote that the Council “rented” Parrish for the publication while Crandall was ill, but Parrish remained the editor until the end of the 1960s. Like Perley Ayer, Parrish was interested in urban Appalachia and outmigration, topics on which he researched and wrote extensively. Parrish’s notes have been saved in the CSM papers, including his notes from an “urban” conference, reading,

there is today a real, increased ‘alienation between youth and adults,’ say various experts. Do many adults hate youth? Certainly there’s often not much talk between them...IMPORTANT: the feeling of being doomed to failure is a self-fulfilling prophecy. The great deficiency of our society is that we don’t offer people any way to deal with hostilities. We say ‘you aren’t supposed to have them.’ (CSM Papers, 8.263.14)

In 1965 a special fortieth anniversary issue of *MLW* was published, in which previous editors Marshall E. Vaughn and Helen Dingman contributed their accounts of their time at *MLW* and how they viewed its transformation. Helen Dingman wrote,

All articles in the magazine have been free gifts. Contributors have ranged from those who have never seen their names in print before...to those who have earned their living with their pens. There were college presidents and perhaps most important of all, mountain workers in remote communities who were dealing with the situations at “the grass roots.” Not only were problems and possible solutions discussed but also

readers were made more and more conscious of the rich heritage of the mountaineer.

(*MLW* 41.3, 6)

Dingman's reflection about *MLW* is more applicable to its later years of era two than to the magazine's work under her editorship, but her comments demonstrate *Mountain Life and Work's* budding engagement with solving problems and supporting "the grass roots" issues (a new term at the time).

In late 1965 and 1966, the Council and *MLW* began to put a longtime plan into action and began to figure out how *Mountain Life and Work* could become a monthly newsletter. These publication decisions occurred while tensions built in the Council and eventually led to the end of this era of *MLW*. Many members of the Council had long felt as though the current leaders were outdated and the Council would benefit from steering its programming in another direction. Part of this plan was a drastic revisioning of *Mountain Life and Work* from a journal-like, literary-leaning, interdisciplinary magazine publication, run by a staff, into an entirely community-based monthly newsletter that dealt primarily with political issues.

A survey was sent to the board, staff, publications committee, and selected readers in 1966, asking for their opinions about *Mountain Life and Work*, specifically whether it effectively related to the Council and covered an appropriately wide range of material with equal significance. This survey did not return as many responses as the committee hoped, but it was the most significant indication to date of the engagement between *MLW* and its audience. The results of this survey demonstrated that the publication was moving away from its previous content to focus on its readers as the driving priority of the publication. The survey included these questions:

1. Does the magazine report the work of the Council?
2. In the balance between the mountain traditions and the stresses of current problems where do you place the magazine?
3. What imaginative leadership does it give to the Council or to those reading about the Council?
4. Please write below any other criticism, favorable or not, that bears on the magazine contents or format (CSM Papers, 8.260.2)

Though this effort returned a small number of responses, they were thorough, and this survey contributed greatly to the decisions soon made by the publications committee about the ways to change *MLW*. Responses to the survey (see Appendix A, pp. 82-88) are detailed and informative, too long to quote in their entirety, but they are a significant element of discussing this era, so I have included them in the Appendix. The most common criticisms of *MLW* were in regards to its continuing reliance on “tradition,” usually outdated notions of the traditional, as a major source of content when the readership was clearly leaning more and more towards political matters. These included responses such as these:

“I suppose readers have been expecting a more knowledgeable, a more thorough coverage of Appalachia and its problems. In other words I believe readers expect more- more comprehensive, more thorough, greater variety of popular, but technically sound pieces”

“...sometimes too technical to be balanced...”

“I feel that *MLW* is trying to balance current traditions and problems.

However I, as an individual feel old-fashioned stress is being put on current problems.”

“Tradition is something a region produces out of itself and therefore is more revealing of the region, holding up to public view its characteristics, its needs, and perhaps its hopes. Publicizing tradition in its above definition could be of much value in the re-development of a region and of much more interest to outside readers and developers...it could very easily become too technical.”

(CSM Papers, 8.260.2)

In 1966, the Council’s publication committee put together a “Proposal for a New *Mountain Life and Work*” (see Appendix B, pp. 89-93), which outlined a detailed description of changes to be made to the magazine. This proposal was a crucial turning point in the magazine’s history. In the first section, “Role of the magazine,” the committee acknowledged *Mountain Life and Work* as having “a distinctive role of its own in influencing the Southern Appalachian Region,” separate from the Council, “a resource for the discovery of an Appalachian identity as it has been seen through the years...*Mountain Life and Work* has been a major force in revealing and expressing the distinctiveness of Appalachia—both its positive cultural contributions and its peculiar problems” (CSM Papers, 8.260.1). The proposal goes on to explain that, until the point of this writing, the magazine’s quarterly format and organization had been appropriate to carry out its tasks, but that the Council “rather suddenly entered the arena of guiding social change” and the magazine’s relevance



was challenged. This proposal explains that the relevance of *MLW* was primarily hindered by limited circulation and the magazine's high cost of printing, as well as the overarching issue of

the traditional policy of the Council which discouraged it from strong advocacy of controversial opinions in print...The magazine has been filled with expressions of concern over current issues, but the specific nature of the concern is often withheld.

This frequent 'holding the punch' decreases its relevance and damages its interest and readability. (CSM Papers, 8.260.1)

The "new" *MLW*, published monthly, would address the "new" condition of Southern Appalachia, which they described as "a region of intense day-to-day activity addressed to the needs of the region and its people...None of the current organs of communication within the region are equipped to deal with this news. None of the quarterly journals...with their slow editing and publication schedules, even attempt this task in a meaningful way" (CSM Papers, 8.260.1). The Council's new imagining of *Mountain Life and Work* would be current, quickly printed and quickly distributed for a quickly changing society. It would no longer maintain a grumpy neutral stance on prevalent issues but support and engage with the activists and concerned citizens that made up the bulk of its subscribers. And, the new *MLW* would be more connected with the Council than ever, which meant that those running the Council would have to agree with this new vision. Perley Ayer, the executive director, was at odds with this new imagining and was soon pressured to resign by Council members.

## To conclude

In 1966 the second era of *MLW* ended when Perley Ayer resigned his position as executive director of the Council under considerable pressure because “a number of board and staff members concluded that the concerns of the Council had changed but Perley Ayer had not” (Glen 53). As described, the Council wanted to pursue a more active role in the current events of Appalachia. Perley Ayer desired to keep the magazine on the same trajectory it had maintained for the past decades, encompassing a wide variety of cultural and traditional features while maintaining a neutral political voice, but this was no longer what the Council wanted. In Loyal Jones’ response to the pivotal survey, he wrote that “we are going through some of the most important social changes of our history and it may look as if we are unaware or unconcerned if we have a large portion of the magazine given to folklore and with the remainder made up of noncommittal articles” (CSM Papers, 8.260.2). The new *Mountain Life and Work* would not be unaware, unconcerned, or noncommittal.

After Ayer’s resignation, Loyal Jones became the Council’s executive director and was for many years the primary advisor of *MLW*. Perley Ayer died just one year later, in 1967. This internal conflict was not entirely over until the Council’s annual meetings at Fontana in 1969 and later Lake Junaluska in 1970, but this shift in *MLW*’s mission and the Council’s leadership, paired with an entirely new design, signaled the end of *MLW*’s second era. This era was characterized by many kinds of development. The magazine reported on issues of urban and industrial development, at the same time focusing on its own development as a prominent voice of Appalachian press. *MLW* developed the scope of its readership demographics, its distribution, its content, and its purpose. This era saw *MLW*

develop into the publication that is best remembered today, the *Mountain Life and Work* which was a vehicle for Appalachian citizens' organization, expression, and activism.

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FROM THIS SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN...

On three occasions recently we have attended conferences and meetings where the problem of making a living in the Mountains was discussed at great lengths. Frankly, these meetings all ended on a note of despair. Are we doomed to go on exporting our best youth because we can't hire them at home? Are we faced with the prospect of farm incomes of less than \$1000 a year? Must we see industry in the Mountains only in the form of fly-by-night shirt factories that exploit our mountain people? Surely someone has some answer to the problem of making a living in the Mountains! We will be very happy to publish any good ideas or any stories of ventures that have produced creative income for highland workers. If you know of any examples of small industries or services that have succeeded, tell us about them, even if you can't write an article. We can get someone else to do the writing if necessary. Ed.

((This article by Dr. Randolph contains the latest and most complete information available concerning the Mountain Church. The author has lived and worked in the area for a long period, so his conclusions are based on first-hand knowledge, even though his office is now in New York.

RELIGION

HIGHLAND CHURCHES

In preparation for the Home Missions Congress in 1950, the Home Missions Council launched a special study of several selected home mission areas. The Southern Appalachian Mountains was one of the areas selected for study. The study consisted of a church-community survey of three counties: Overton in Tenn.; Pike in Ky.; and Yancey in N.C. The survey findings indicated several common problems with reference to rural churches:

DENOMINATIONAL OVERLAPPING

There is a tremendous amount of denominational overlapping and duplication, with too many churches located too close together, clamoring for the attention and support of the people. It is generally assumed that a population of 1,000 people in a community is necessary to give adequate support to one church. This study disclosed cases of two to five churches per 1,000 population. Such duplication results in an overchurched situation which weakens the whole Christian program. No one of the churches has sufficient strength to carry on a decent program along any worthy line. The buildings are usually small, ill-equipped and poorly kept. The ministry is not resident in the community and is shared by many churches without any unification of effort. The church does not serve the community in any sense. It is divisive and destructive to cooperative effort of any sort.

LACK OF COOPERATION

The lack of cooperation is one of the most noticeable qualities among the churches in the counties surveyed. It is characterized by the almost total absence of federated churches, community churches, interdenominational larger parishes, and other forms of

Figure 2. Sample format of *Mountain Life and Work* during era 2.

#### Chapter 4—The Activism Era (1968-1988)

An issue of *Mountain Life and Work* from 1968 appears to be a completely different magazine than the one first started in 1925—it seems as though the only similarity is its title. By 1968, the beginning of the last era of *MLW*, the magazine and the Council running it had changed drastically. The long history of these changes was summed up in a 1978 grant proposal, written by volunteers:

The Council of the Southern Mountains was formed in 1913 as a regional communications link between professional people working in mission-type efforts in Appalachia. *MLW* began publication in the spring of 1925 as the official publication of the Council. In 1977, the Council still serves as a communication line, but since 1969 the membership is of political grassroots level organization. Since 1969 the Council has grown in members and in purpose. The older priorities of recreation, folk tradition, the role of mission schools, the future of mountain farming have been replaced. The office was moved from a college town to the heart of central Appalachia in 1972. The membership is made up of groups representing various grassroots county organizations, individual members such as both active and retired or disabled coal miners, as well as urban Appalachian representatives. Our priorities focus now on issues like strip mining, health services, black lung and brown lung benefits, the rights of workers and unionizing activities, coal mine health and safety, welfare rights, and co-ops. (CSM Papers, 6.179.21)

This last era of *Mountain Life and Work*'s publication is the least focused on in scholarship, but the most recognized era in Appalachian Studies today. It switched from a quarterly to a monthly format, resulting in more issues than ever before. The contents of *MLW* during era three are now synonymous with the publication's name. During these twenty years the magazine assumed its most single-minded focus yet and became the primary vehicle of activist voices in Appalachia. The readers of *MLW* were its driving force, more than writer and content. Coming out of the major Council schism, which could itself be considered a separate "mini" era, the Council and therefore *Mountain Life and Work* appeared to be almost antithetical to the original intentions of the organization and their magazine, but the core intentions of changing ideas about Appalachia and community-based activism remained the same.

Unlike the previous eras, throughout most of these last twenty years *MLW* had no editor or dedicated staff, and was entirely created and compiled by volunteers. Subscribers included people of all demographics, and the ever-changing list of contributors indicate that the content of the magazine was entirely decided by those reading and creating it. Over forty years after its first publication, *MLW* transformed in this last period from a publication speaking *for* the mountain people, into publication focused on mountain people speaking for themselves.

At the time of Whisnant's *Modernizing the Mountaineer*, the Council and *MLW* were still active, so his comprehensive history does not detail the end of this era, but he does describe how at this time the "new Council" exhibited a strong "tough-mindedness about the sources and effects of exploitation, insistence on structural reform, willingness to engage in necessary conflict, and efforts to help local people and groups determine their own future"

(32-33). It is notable that during this time, Appalachian Studies began to develop as an academic discipline, a trend that *MLW* had anticipated years before.

Following the drastic reworking of the *MLW* format, it was a monthly publication and included regular features not yet seen in the magazine, most notably the Appalachian Roundup and Letters from Our Readers sections. Both of these sections illustrate how important the audience was to the publication at this time—reader feedback informed much of the publishing decisions, and *MLW* was now a forum through which readers could communicate. Appalachian Roundup appeared in every issue, and through the 1970s began to take up more and more of the magazine. This was a kind of “classified” section that also included short articles, news, and opinions, and functioned as a forum for news and events throughout the region. In the 1966 proposal for the new *MLW*, this section was described as “A state-by-state summary of news in the Southern Appalachian region, particularly news with regional distinctiveness” (CSM Papers, 8.260.1). The Appalachian Roundup section was one of the most loved features of the magazine and contributed greatly to this era’s focus on *MLW* as a community-based resource, driven by its audience.

### **Theories of Activism**

In the introduction to his edited collection *Fighting Back in Appalachia: Traditions of Resistance and Change*, Stephen L. Fisher writes that “one of the goals of this volume is to dispel mainstream notions of Appalachians as passive victims by allowing people in the region to tell their side of the story” (2-3). During this last era of *MLW*, Appalachian people were finally using the magazine to tell their side of the story. In his idea of Appalachian neopopulism, Fisher identifies the most important task for neopopulists as empowerment,

with “community as the main locus of democracy” (318). His presentation of an Appalachian neopopulism highlights the importance of community in developing democratic consciousness, and specifically identifies the idea of “free spaces” as central to community building (319). During this era, *Mountain Life and Work* functioned as a free space. This time more than any other the magazine was a forum for readers to communicate, plan, and express opinions. *MLW* was a locus of activism and served as a free space for readers across Appalachia. It also highlighted the importance of community building and advocated for community resource development while highlighting ways in which traditional values of communities could be used for progressive means. This is another characteristic of Appalachian neopopulism which Fisher discusses, writing “Neopopulism suggests that traditional values and institutions can be a part of a progressive political outlook...The argument is not that people’s traditions are inherently radical...but these traditions, when under attack, can provide the commitments and categories out of which radical protest will emerge” (319). *MLW*’s function as a free space aligns with the importance of the audience in this era—more than any other time, the readers influenced what was published in *MLW*, and much of the magazine was written by the readers themselves.

As has been mentioned, John Gaventa’s outline of the establishment and eventual challenging of power relations mirrors my analysis of the evolution of *Mountain Life and Work*. Gaventa’s final step, the challenging of power relations, is particularly applicable to era three of *MLW*, the most single-minded era of the publication. Summarized by Fisher, Gaventa asserts that “People must develop their own notions of interest and actions, and of themselves as political actors in the process of organizing to challenge injustices” (“Power” 146). In other words, the powerless themselves must decide to change the situation. In



*Mountain Life and Work*, the gradual progress towards this decision was evident in era three, primarily through the letters from readers. The letters, which served as a virtual “free space,” documented the process by which Appalachian readers of *MLW*, the “powerless,” “develop[ed] their own vehicles for challenge...to locate and overcome the barriers which normally deny them access to the decision-making arenas” (Fisher, “Power” 146). *Mountain Life and Work* became both a vehicle for challenge and a decision-making arena.

### **Timeline of Activism Era**

The Activism Era of *Mountain Life and Work*, beginning in 1968 and lasting until the magazine’s end in 1988, was *MLW*’s busiest era. This was also a busy era for Appalachia and the nation. This era saw the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, after landmark events such as Kent State and Woodstock. The United States completed its first moon landing mission in 1969. President Richard Nixon declared a “war on drugs” and then resigned the presidency after the Watergate scandal. In Appalachia, mountaintop removal mining was introduced in 1970 and led to numerous mining disasters, including the Scotia explosion and the Buffalo Creek Flood. This era saw the Pittston and Brookside strikes. In 1976, the Appalachian Studies Association began at a planning conference in 1977.<sup>4</sup>

This era began in 1968 with the new monthly format, finally come to pass after years of meetings and surveys. As discussed in era two, the monthly format was meant to serve the magazine’s new mission of efficiently reporting the vast number of events continually unfolding in Appalachia, from a participatory rather than neutral standpoint. The first issue of

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<sup>4</sup> For a detailed discussion of the development of the Appalachian Studies Association, see Brown, Logan, et al. “Where Have We Been? Where Are We Going? A History of the Appalachian Studies Association.” *Appalachian Journal*, vol. 31, no. 1, 2003, pp. 30–92. This article also includes more detailed information about the CSM schism in 1970.

this year was published in February, and the introductory editorial called this a “new *Mountain Life and Work*” (*MLW* 43.1, 1). But rather than celebrate the magazine’s new mission and priorities, this was a memorial issue for Perley Ayer, who passed away in late 1967. This issue, and later issues in the next few years, brought small changes in *MLW* that indicated the Council’s shifting values, which would become totally fused with *MLW* by 1972. *MLW* published an advertisement in the bottom corner of a page that read “We invite you—to become a reporter for *Mountain Life and Work*...there’s nothing abstract about news—it’s people in action” (*MLW* 43.1, 3). This was the first time *MLW* had so clearly solicited readers to become reporters, rather than merely contributors of poetry. The advertisements in *MLW* abandoned industries like Lily Mills and began to target readers, addressing the future, saying “1999? What is the future of Appalachia? Will tomorrow just happen? NO!” (*MLW* 43.2, 2). This was a call to action for Appalachian citizens, to join the Council but also to take an active role in the future of Appalachia. For the first time, *MLW* was addressing its readers as being capable of affecting change, rather than abstract beings onto whom change was inflicted.

In 1968 *MLW* included with its magazines a memo to all subscribers, cheekily addressed:

MEMO: To Myself: I must subscribe to MOUNTAIN LIFE AND WORK—the Magazine of the Appalachian South Today—because: I am concerned about Appalachia—its people and its problems. I am fascinated by its culture. I am interested in its future. *MLW* tells the full story of the region in varied and fascinating detail. Every month, some of the region’s leading journalists, sociologists,

economists, community action specialists, fiction writers, poets, speak through this magazine. (CSM Papers, 6.180.20)

This memo went on to claim “TO SUM UP: *MLW* is the authentic voice of Appalachia. I need to listen to it.” The beginning of this era marked the first time that *MLW* really was the *authentic* voice of Appalachia, rather than the voice of what people thought Appalachia should be. However, Council conflicts were hindering publication. From 1970 to 1971, almost all the articles in *MLW* were reprints. According to the fiftieth anniversary review issue, only one article was printed besides the Appalachian Roundup, yet circulation expanded as financial support dwindled (*MLW* 51.2, 22).

Loyal Jones had been the executive director of the CSM, as well as the primary advisor for *MLW*, since Perley Ayer’s resignation in 1966, but this ended after the Council’s annual meeting at Fontana in 1969. At this meeting, a vote was made to require fifty-one percent of the Council’s board to be “poor people” and it was also voted to publicly oppose the Vietnam War (Glen 54). Despite the more radical leanings that had led to Perley Ayer’s clash with the Council, these votes were still seen as shifting far to left-wing by many long-time Council members. A year later, at the Lake Junaluska annual meeting 1970, it was decided to publicly oppose strip mining. Soon after, Loyal Jones resigned over conflicts due to the “three crises” of the Council, as he saw them: finances, leadership conflicts, and “confusion of purpose”—which encompassed all the disputes over new highly political stances (Whisnant 28). Jim Somerville, the interim Council president, published an editorial in *MLW* detailing the conflict in the Council’s political leanings, describing an opinion held by many conference-goers that “the great Communist conspiracy had taken over the Council”

that many conference-goers held. Somerville explained that a fairly large number of conference attendees believed the Council to be “dangerous” because they saw “one institution not merely talking about change, but undergoing change.” Somerville went on to claim that hope, not danger, should characterize the Council’s actions: “Today’s organization is no model for what a great people’s movement will be in the Appalachian Mountains; it is only the hope of that. Surely the effective organization in the rebuilding of Appalachia will involve many more people than we do, surely it will appeal to more kinds of people” (*MLW* 47.7, 2). In this editorial Somerville explained the nature of the divide at the conference and asserted the Council’s overall goal of becoming just one of many community-based organizations for making change and instilling hope in Appalachia. Once again the Council was on the verge of collapse but the general attitude of remaining members was “if the Council falls, we will build it again” (qtd. in Whisnant, 28).

In Loyal Jones’ place, Warren Wright became executive director and editor. Wright’s influence on *MLW* resulted in more writing about “the region’s colonial system of education, West Virginia’s regressive tax structure, the Appalachian Power Company’s Blue Ridge project, and the coal industry” (Whisnant 29), all issues that *Mountain Life and Work* had been skirting but not directly addressing due to its insistence on remaining neutral. Whisnant praises Wright’s efforts as being refreshing, but his fellow staff at *MLW* took issue with his philosophy, believing his vision for the magazine differed from what it should be. In a letter to the Board, certain staff members aired their grievances about Wright, saying that their vision of *MLW* was “to make the magazine more relevant to people throughout the region, particularly poor and working-class Appalachians” (CSM Papers, 8260.1) but that Wright’s agenda was to make *MLW* a part of his own program as executive director of the Council. In

this letter, the board expressed anger about Wright's ability to "both determine the philosophy of the magazine and to hire and fire staff...we have no responsibility at all" (CSM Papers, 8.260.1). Wright's tenure as executive secretary ended after only one year, after which the Council abandoned the idea of an executive altogether. There was no longer a list of "staff" in the front matter of each issue, with specific roles assigned. From this point on, the credits of *MLW* was simply a list of names titled "People Who Worked on This Issue." Many people on the Council staff appeared in most issues, such as Sally Maggard, Dan Hendrickson, Elmer Rasnick, Si Kahn, Billie Fuller, and Cindy Mullins, and could be considered the primary staff, but no two issues were compiled by the exact same group of people as before.

In 1972, The Council of the Southern Mountains moved its office from Berea, Kentucky, to Clintwood, Virginia, the heart of the coalfields. This move was an effort to make the Council office more central to its readership and easier for staff to travel to and from. A brief article about the move in August 1972 described Council members as "people from all walks of life...teachers, miners, health professionals, welfare recipients, young people, old people, black people, church leaders and members from many different churches and denominations, and other individuals concerned about the mountains" (*MLW* 48.7, 1). This list of participants was drastically different from the demographics of early *Mountain Life and Work*, which included much less diversity, and illustrates how much the influence of the magazine had changed—it was finally a voice of the people. The Council and therefore *MLW* had become free spaces "where 'people's history' can be connected to a systematic critique of the political economy, where participants can begin to see the connection between their concerns and those of other exploited people...where people can start to envision new

alternatives to the world in which they live” (Fisher, *Fighting Back* 329). The Council’s move to Clintwood established it even more firmly at the heart of the Appalachian community, a tool of the people.

For the next decade, *Mountain Life and Work* was in its “golden years,” the period most synonymous with its name today. During this decade *MLW* came into its element as a community-driven, reader-created resource for news. Its consistent reporting on activism, its special issues covering topics such as Women, Textiles, Unions, Blacks in Appalachia, were unprecedented in the region and established *Mountain Life and Work* as a necessary component of a growing awareness of Appalachia. It provided a forum for communication, a vehicle for activists and citizens from all walks of life to find and share information.

This was the era when *MLW* was most beloved by its audience, which letters show. However, the magazine’s single-minded focus on activism could be seen as similar to its presentation of the region in era one. In its early years, much of *MLW* rhetoric generalized mountain people as *all* poor, *all* uneducated, *all* needing help. By era three this agenda had long since vanished, but *MLW* still proclaimed to be the voice of Appalachia, while focusing on one or two issues that made up just one part of Appalachian life. It could be said that in era three, *MLW* generalized its depiction of Appalachian people as *all* devoted to social justice and protest, when this was true of just a part of its audience. Its gradual abandonment of other kinds of material (arts and culture, etc.) excluded a more well-rounded view of Appalachian life from its scope, therefore painting the whole region as involved in resistance. This echoed the way that *MLW*, in its early years, generalized its portrayal of the region. In each case, *Mountain Life and Work*’s contents inadvertently attempted to describe all of Appalachia as fitting an image most aligned with *MLW* and the Council’s program—first

reform, later activism. This homogenized view of the region may have been one reason the Council struggled so consistently for funding.

The Council of the Southern Mountains papers that correspond to this time period are comprised mostly of documents representing the two most important elements of *Mountain Life and Work's* function at this time: letters and finance. During this era the magazine published more letters from readers than any other time, and the number of these letters increased every year. Countless letters not published in the pages of *MLW* can be found in the Council archives at Berea College (For informative sample letters and excerpts, see Appendix C, pp. 94-99). The bulk of these archives, though, are comprised of financial statements and grant proposals. The CSM had always struggled with inconsistent funding, but it appears as though in this last, most productive era, the Council's financial situation was the most precarious it had ever been. The final era of *MLW* was defined by its increasingly desperate search for funding, and as its influence grew, its need for funds increased, but the need was rarely met. In a 1973 grant proposal, the Council wrote that between 1972 and 1973 alone, printings of *MLW* doubled, from 3500 to 7000 copies circulated annually to

grocery stores, gas stations, churches, rummage clubs, local community groups...Many of these are passed out to new readers, often people who cannot afford to subscribe...Anti-strip mining groups, local welfare rights groups, various co-ops, school librarians, miners, teachers, and local organizers are among the people who are asking for more copies to help with their work. (CSM Papers, 6.179.18)

This shows how *MLW*, more than ever, was a voice for the people by the people—but its increasingly wide circulation needed more funding.

A 1974 proposal for the Campaign for Human Development grant expressed the importance of *Mountain Life and Work* as it had evolved fifty years after its first publication:

As more local, grassroots groups are getting stronger in Appalachia, and as the Council works more with more groups, the more demand we have for our monthly newsmagazine *Mountain Life and Work*... It will be read by mountain people themselves and not just “professionals”...The purpose of the magazine is to build unity among mountain people themselves by keeping each other informed of community news and organizing events. In the last two years, we have tripled the number of copies each month, because local groups use dozens and even hundreds of copies to publicize their work, when other newspapers won’t tell our story. (CSM Papers, 6.179.18)

This description of *MLW*, written in 1974, describes *Mountain Life and Work*’s significance during its peak operations. This year was when “the move to turn the Council into a ‘people’s organization’ reached its apex” (printed in the same proposal), and this apex lasted until the early 1980s, though the consistent appeals for grant money were rarely fruitful and financial statements in the archives from this period illustrate Council’s slow decline into bankruptcy. In 1977, the magazine’s expenses totaled \$50,900, but the total revenue was \$43,615<sup>5</sup>—more than \$7,000 short of breaking even, and this figure *included* a grant of \$31,500 from the

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<sup>5</sup>The Council of the Southern Mountains became a corporation in the mid-1950s when its official title changed from Conference of the Southern Mountain Workers to the Council of the Southern Mountains, Inc.



Commission on Religion in Appalachia (CORA) (CSM Papers, 6.180.7). In 1978, the Council did not receive a grant from CORA. In this year it increased subscribers by 250, and sales by 500, but without the CORA money the year-end revenue of *MLW* for 1978 was \$12,865, nowhere near its \$51,500 expenditure.

Even the letters and excerpts from letters published in the magazine began to hint at the situation, and in the later years many selected letters were from readers writing about their enclosed payment, with statements such as these:

I am enclosing my \$5.00 subscription fee...Later on I hope to send money for membership. I hope you can keep up the good work. (*MLW* 49.5, 1)

“Enclosed is a check for \$50.00 for your work. We wish it could more, but we, too are at minimum salary.” (December 1976)

“The last issue of *Mountain Life and Work* is so good, I enclose a contribution for continuation.” (April 1975)

“I am sending you a little contribution...Currently, I’m unemployed, and I’m a student, so my check isn’t as much as it could be.” (May 1975)

“Times are tough for everyone, but I knew I could forego fixing my stereo to send you this check.” (December 1977)

After 1980, *MLW* began to publish blatant solicitations for funds, such as an ad appearing in March 1980:

INFLATION!! IT'S HITTING US TOO. Printing costs are skyrocketing, postal rates continue to rise, and the bills are pouring in. Just getting the magazine to you costs us \$2,000 *more every month* than it did last year. Unless we have additional funds we may not be able to continue printing *MLW*. IF YOU LIKE *MLW* KEEP US AROUND! (*MLW* 56.3, 3)

In 1981, there were 702 paying subscribers for *MLW*, and the total revenue for this year was \$6,175, a sharp decline from just three years prior. The 1982 expenses totaled \$41,102, and the 1983 expenses more than doubled to \$149,379, but income this year was only \$1,423. The staff was comprised of a mix of paid and volunteer positions, so much of the expense budget was devoted to paying salaries. The fluctuating staff could explain the unstable expenses. In other words, without funding, the Council and *MLW* were running out of money fast. Any paid staff were eliminated, and the publication was put together by volunteers. The magazine began to consolidate issues, often skipping months and publishing two issues together, in shortened formats. Apologies were published such as one in 1984 reading “Due to the Council’s financial difficulty and being short-handed on staff, *MLW* will be combining the May-June as well as the July-August issue” (*MLW* 60.4, 3).

In 1983, the Council was evicted from their Clintwood offices but remained chipper. A memo in the archives describes this situation, writing “memberships and subscriptions held strong; we were evicted and disrupted for more than three weeks; dozens of members

sent donations restricted for the ‘move.’ We got a mailing behind as a result of the time-consuming move, packing and unpacking, which may decrease subs in May” (CSM Papers, 6.180.7). But with this eviction, *MLW* received an outpouring of support from readers, donating what they could, and wrote that “there are a few positive aspects to being evicted” (*MLW* 59.5, 38).

In 1985, *Mountain Life and Work* published an article titled “Bankruptcy Appeal,” which detailed to subscribers the particulars of the CSM’s financial situation. The article explained that the Council had filed for bankruptcy after “several years of efforts to remove the Council from debt” but that “We did not see this as surrender. It will not mean the closing of the Council. The process...allows an organization to clear away its debts in an organized way and to make a fresh start” (*MLW* 60.10, 3). And the Council did not close, but after a brief hiatus, continued for three more years. Letters in *MLW* expressed readers’ admiration and relief that the CSM and *MLW* were still operating:

“Haven’t heard anything in so long that I was beginning to wonder if you were still around. Glad to know you still are”

“Sure good to know the Council is back at work!”

“Your labors sure showed that you can bounce back with vigor. I do hope that 196-87 will give you renewed courage” (*MLW* 62.2, 39)

The Council was optimistic about rebuilding, and published many editorials about their renewed efforts, plans for future issues, and indicated that this hardship could be just the beginning of a fourth, long-lasting era of MLW. But this was not to be. A memo written in 1988 claimed “We, the staff, realize that the magazine is not the way it used to be; but keep in mind...We, the staff, feel that with the people we have and the equipment that we are making a strong comeback. It takes time to climb the ladder” (CSM Papers, 6.179.1).

*Mountain Life and Work* and the Council of the Southern Mountains had survived other crises and apparent ends, coming out the other side to continue being the voice of Appalachia. But the end of this era would prove to be the end of *Mountain Life and Work* altogether.

### **To conclude**

The last twenty years of *Mountain Life and Work* were the years in which the magazine published the most issues and the most content. It was also the era with the largest number of subscribers, most diverse reader demographics, and most participation from the citizens of Appalachia, those actually living and working in the mountains. This era was when *MLW* became the tool of communication and change that it is now remembered as by those who read it. These years were driven by the readers of the magazine, characterized by activism, resistance, and finally taking a stance on life-changing issues in Appalachia after so many years of neutrality. During this era, *Mountain Life and Work* was a free space and a forum, created by the people of Appalachia for the people. This was the era in which the “interpreter” of the mountain people finally became the voice of the mountain people.

**MOUNTAIN LIFE & WORK**

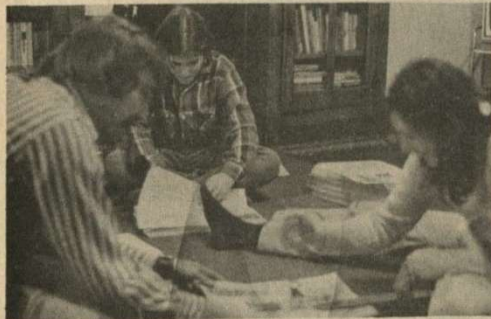
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PEOPLE WHO WORKED ON THIS ISSUE: Rich Kirby, Beth Bingman, Linda Elkinton, Frankie Taylor, Dan Hendrickson, Linda Johnson, Sally Maggard, Debbie Edwards, Don Jacobsmeyer.

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Last month's stapling "party" in Williamsburg, Ky.  
Would your group help some month?

**MOUNTAIN LIFE & WORK** is published monthly, with the exception of a combined July-August issue, by the Council of the Southern Mountains, Inc., Old Bank Building, Main Street, Clintwood, Va. Entered as second-class matter at Clintwood. Manuscripts, photographs, and art work should be sent to the above address. The magazine welcomes such materials, but the publishers assume no responsibility for any unsolicited materials submitted. Signed articles appearing herein are not necessarily the expression of editorial opinion nor do they necessarily carry the endorsement of the Council of the Southern Mountains or its officers.

**LETTERS****Justice for the Poor Man**

It's time to stop kidding ourselves. I took a long hard look at our last presidential election and wondered why people could be so blind. I wanted to believe Mr. Nixon but I really don't see any of his policies. Mr. Nixon's policies keep down-grading approximately seventy percent of the nation's population. It seems to me that any man with common knowledge could see the direction in which this nation is headed. It is my opinion that many do see but do not take the necessary action to do something about it. How the poor, elderly, disabled and working man could have stayed away from the polls on election day is beyond me. The people who stayed home sacrificed the only weapon they have to straighten out the mess this nation is in. It's too late to do anything about it this time, but I hope the people will awaken before the next election. It is a political battle that all people should join in.

We have no courts to protect our rights. It seems to me that big industry has pretty well got this nation under their thumbs. Judges are not necessarily elected with the honor of citizens any more, but with the lies and dollars of millionaires. If you are a poor man and you happen to get into court there is one thing I hope you will remember; when you approach the Judge's bench subtract "your honor" from the judge's name. With many of our judges courts you won't feel your case has been handled with honor when you leave the court room. I really don't think there is one in a thousand would deal out justice to a poor man. I sincerely hope that the time will come shortly when we can approach the Judge's bench and speak clearly from the heart "Judge Your Honor." I hope the people through out all the states reads my comments. If anyone want to write to me, write to this address:  
Mart Shepherd, Route 2, Box 348, Hazard, Ky. 41701

Mart Shepherd

Dear C.S.M.,

Here's my contribution to help raise your \$3,000 - wish I could do more, but I'm working for poverty wages now. I'm already a C.S.M. member.

I am impressed by your latest issue, especially the article on women. And, you are doing a good job on what's happening here in Charleston, often better than the *Gazette*.

I am working at a community center in a small community near Spring Hill, W.Va. - the people are poor - the kids have lots of promise. . . I guess I work mainly with the kids and teens. I'm hoping I can gradually get some of the citizens here interested in the Council. So, if there are any meetings, conferences coming up, let me know. Sometimes it keeps me going just to read *ML&W* and hear about people who are organized.

Thanks for listening. Happy New Year  
Carolyn Wright

Figure 3. Sample format of *Mountain Life and Work* during era 3

## Chapter Five—Conclusion

After bankruptcy, the Council struggled to publish *Mountain Life and Work* for three more years. The magazine reverted back to a quarterly format and was printed on cheap newsprint, reminiscent of its 1950's look, but it was still distributed and worked to build up its readership after bankruptcy. Letters of steadfast support were published in the magazine, showing that *MLW* still had a dedicated support base who expressed sentiments such as “Hang in there! Keep remembering there are some of us out here who still care a lot about you and the Council” (*MLW* 64.3, 45). Its last issue, in 1988, gave no indication that the publication was over. A letter to readers on the last page of the December issue read,

Dear Friends: The Staff of the Council of the Southern Mountains would like to take this opportunity to wish each of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Our financial situation is still in a bind, but with your help both morally and financially, we will succeed. We are excited over our victories in 1988 and look forward to more in 1989. So if you would take a moment and drop us your donation in the mail, we would sincerely appreciate it. Merry Christmas from CSM. (*MLW* 64.2, 48)

Whatever the Council's intentions to continue publishing, this was the last issue of *Mountain Life and Work*. The Council's official archives include almost no material about this end, and the Council itself would close just a few months later in 1989. Much of the scholarship informing my work was written about the Council and does not address its end.

The sixty-three-year span of *Mountain Life and Work* is a documented history of Appalachia, a region that went from being silenced to having a voice. *MLW* is in many ways

representative of that voice. *Mountain Life and Work* encompassed every subject pertaining to Appalachia during its run, from handicrafts to hunger, music to mining unions. In its 1975 fiftieth anniversary issue, *MLW* described itself as “like a ‘coat of many colors’” (*MLW* 51.1, 3). Its creators, readers, and content all drove the purpose of the magazine and reflected the activities of the Council of the Southern Mountains as well as Appalachia as a whole. In its first years, 1925-1949, *Mountain Life and Work* strove to change education systems in Appalachia, as well as to educate the nation about the southern mountains. This era saw *MLW* as the voice of its creators, especially Helen Dingman, and it established itself as the primary “interpreter” of the mountains, though it circulated primarily among educated elites. In its second era, 1950-1967, *Mountain Life and Work* began to turn its attention to issues of development. Social topics such as outmigration and urban Appalachia were prominent, and side effects of development were apparent in *MLW* and the Council’s financial struggles and embrace of advertisements. This era was defined by the scope of quantity of its content, and as its subject matter developed, so did its reader demographics and subscription radius. Through these turbulent years *MLW* maintained its place in developing Appalachia, but changing times and heightened call to action led to a drastic shift and a new era.

In its final run, 1968-1988, *Mountain Life and Work* became the activist newsletter most commonly associated with its name today. During this era, action and change were at the center of every issue, and the contents were more influenced by the readers than ever before. There was no staff, and *MLW* was entirely created by its own subscribers. In this era *MLW* was a forum and free space for communities to connect and organize, and the magazine was finally the voice *of* the Appalachian people.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> For a further exploration of publications functioning as free spaces, as well as ways in which community organizations change democracy in Appalachia, see Couto, Richard. *Making Democracy Work Better*:

## Further work

Writing this thesis has seemed to me like an insurmountable endeavor, but this is just one step in re-establishing *Mountain Life and Work* as a prominent primary source of Appalachian Studies history. *Mountain Life and Work* is just one of many independent publications that popped up in Appalachia, especially in the years 1970-1990. One project that would contribute to understanding the importance of *Mountain Life and Work* would be to examine it in relation to these other localized publications, a task which has been proposed by Green and Locklear: “As a discipline of action and thought that transcends academic boundaries, Appalachian studies needs to conduct a careful study of community-based magazines that were and continue to be central mechanisms in its rise” (74). Green and Locklear provide such a list of publications, along with the place of origin and publication dates:

*Unrealist*, WV, 1978-1982  
*Wind*, KY, 1970-2005  
*Mountain Call*, WV, 1973-1978  
*Appalachian Notes*, KY, 1973-1985  
*Mountain Review*, KY, 1974-1981  
*Pudding Stone*, TN, 1974-1977  
*The Plow*, VA, 1975-1979  
*Small Farm*, TN, 1975-1980  
*Hill and Valley*, WV, 1977-1985  
*Illustrated Appalachian Intelligencer*, WV, 1977-1982  
*Touchstone*, TN, 1977-1980  
*Katuah*, NC, 1983-1993<sup>7</sup>  
*Pine Mountain Sand & Gravel*, KY, 1986-present  
*Still: The Journal*, KY, 2009-present (74)

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*Mediating Structures, Social Capital, and the Democratic Project*. UNC Press, 1999. I discovered this text at a late stage in my thesis work but its discussion of community-based democracy is applicable to the function of *Mountain Life and Work*.

<sup>7</sup> *Katuah* has been digitized by Andrea Leonard for Appalachian State University Special Collections



A similar case study of these publications could help to illustrate the scope and significance of the network of local Appalachian press, especially in the latter half of the twentieth century. *MLW* was just one part of this network, and the connections between it and these other magazines would provide an even more thorough understanding of how Appalachia and the public perceptions of the region developed.

I initially came to this project with a wild idea that I might be able to write a comprehensive index for the whole magazine—all sixty-three years. It was very soon apparent that such a project was far beyond the scope of a master's thesis, but this still needs to be done if *Mountain Life and Work* is to remain an important Appalachian Studies primary source. Throughout its span, *MLW* was indexed intermittently, often by volunteers. There are many gaps in its indexing, no continuity between index formats, and even with issue-to-issue indexes there is no way to search the entirety of *MLW* for a name or topic without thumbing through every issue. A cohesive index is a crucial element in the process of preserving *Mountain Life and Work*.

Another project that desperately needs doing is a complete, searchable digitization of the entire back run of this publication. At the time of writing, some of *Mountain Life and Work* is available online, but it is incomplete, non-searchable, and unorganized. What really needs to be done is a complete digitization of the entire run, in concurrence with the index, on a media platform that makes it possible to locate any issue or cross reference with ease. In 1970, the writers of *MLW* began to see how the magazine could be a significant resource for the future of Appalachian Studies as the very idea of "Appalachian Studies" was developing in academia, as an unaddressed memo in the archives indicates:

we are beginning a search for the missing issues so the CSM can put together ML&W sets. There probably exists a ready market for these sets. Interest has been expressed by several individuals and colleges and universities developing Appalachian studies programs. These 'sets' would contain valuable articles and research in the mountains running back to the Spring of 1925. (CSM Papers, 6.179.18)

This idea never materialized, these resources never created, and now thirty years after *MLW* ended publication, it is on the verge of being forgotten. To keep *Mountain Life and Work* as a valuable, utilized resource of Appalachian history, reference material must be created to make the magazine accessible in an age of digital research. The story of *Mountain Life and Work* is the story of Appalachia. Its development across sixty-three years from reform to resistance mirrors the transformation of Appalachia, a region that was once spoken for but came to speak out.

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## Appendix A- 1966 Survey Responses

## Council of the Southern Mountains Papers, Series 8, Box 260, Folder 2

## PARTIAL REPORT OF QUESTIONNAIRE ON MOUNTAIN LIFE &amp; WORK

## REPLIES:

Board	2	2
Staff	5	5
Publications Committee	4	4
Selected Readers	7	7
		<hr/> 18

## 1. Reporting work of the Council of the Southern Mountains:

Well	8	5	(Average or above, 11)
Adequate	4	6	
Poor	3	4	

## 2. Balance in reporting:

Good	14	13	(Average or above, 15)
Old Fashioned	4	2	
Too technical	1	0	

## 3. Leadership:

Advanced	7	5	(Average or above, 11)
Average	7	6	
Weak	4	3	

## 4. Comments:

Favorable	11
Unfavorable	1

Some replies checked with no comment. Others checked some categories and not all.  
Some commented without checks.

Memorandum to:

Board of Directors; Council Staff;  
Publications Committee and Advisors

From:

Editors of Mountain Life & Work

Date:

September 27, 1966

We are taking a hard look at our magazine to try to see how significant it is and how to improve it. On the basis of your reading of it during the last year will you answer a few questions for us?

1. Does the magazine report the work of the Council?  
☐ Very well    ☒ Adequately    ☐ Poorly
2. In the balance between the mountain traditions and the stresses of current problems where do you place the magazine?  
☒ Balanced    ☐ Old fashioned    ☐ Too technical
3. What imaginative leadership does it give to the Council or to those reading about the Council?  
☒ Advanced    ☐ Average    ☐ Weak
4. Please write below any other criticisms, favorable or not, that bear on the magazine contents or format.

*I think you are doing a good job.*

*Cordially,*

*Paul Spray*

Memorandum to: Board of Directors; Council Staff;  
Publications Committee and Advisors

From: Editors of Mountain Life & Work

Date: September 27, 1966

We are taking a hard look at our magazine to try to see how significant it is and how to improve it. On the basis of your reading of it during the last year will you answer a few questions for us?

1. Does the magazine report the work of the Council?  
( ) Very well ( ) Adequately (X) Poorly
2. In the balance between the mountain traditions and the stresses of current problems where do you place the magazine?  
( ) Balanced (X) Old fashioned & (X) Too technical
3. What imaginative leadership does it give to the Council or to those reading about the Council?  
( ) Advanced ( ) Average (X) Weak
4. Please write below any other criticisms, favorable or not, that bear on the magazine contents or format.

*I would like to see the magazine done in a more  
Brightly colored, easier to read style. It should  
Present more about council activities also.*



Re ML&W

Ma ce,

I wanted to reply more fully your questionnaire would allow.

1. I don't believe it reported the Council as well as it could. But the word ~~report~~ "report" is part of the problem. I feel that the magazine reports on what is or was and does not project the Council's aims and purposes. This is a Council-wide problem and ~~is~~ also my fault, perley's fault and the Board's fault. The Council's direction is not as clear as I would wish. I hope that in the Editorial Committee we can project more.

2. I think the balance has been pretty good. I do believe we should have articles on the culture. However, I think that we are going ~~th~~ through some of the most important social changes of our history and it may look as if we are unaware or unconcerned if we have a large portion of the magazine given to folklore and with the remainder made up of noncommittal articles. There have been dramatic things happening across the country and even all around us which have not been mentioned in ML&W, for example the Civil Rights movement and the full import of "maximum feasible participation."

3. Again this is not just the problem of ML&W. I think the Council itself is saying more about what we won't do than we are about what we believe in and what we will do or want to see done. For example, I feel that we will allow "community action" to happen but we haven't said that we want it to happen and that we will work to see it happen. ML&W has lead with some good provocative articles. I think we ought to go all out to get articles which say something new or different or which present a "thesis." We don't have to agree with the point of view necessarily but we ought to present it. ~~What~~ I think that we ought to seek articles from the best thinkers we know about. An example might be to ask Theobald to put his ideas into an Appalachian context.

Editorially I think we ought to pick out one idea, or project, or fact and say something definitely about it. I don't think we necessarily have to have an editorial each time. We can let the articles speak for us.

4. I think the format of the magazine is much improved. The new size and the color cover help a great deal. Also the type is better. I thought the Alice Lloyd article was very good, and I liked the way it lead from the front cover right into the article

We need better proof reading and more careful checking on facts. Examples: Having Wittenburg College listed as being in Yellow Springs; the lost sentence on the Mary Clyde Garner article, and the changing of sex of a character in THE FAR FAMILY and of the author in THE FIRST 40 YEARS OF THE JOHN C. CAMPBELL FOLK SCHOOL reviews.

*Taylor*

Memorandum to: Board of Directors; Council Staff;  
Publications Committee and Advisors

From: Editors of Mountain Life & Work

Date: September 27, 1966

We are taking a hard look at our magazine to try to see how significant it is and how to improve it. On the basis of your reading of it during the last year will you answer a few questions for us?

1. Does the magazine report the work of the Council?  
( ) Very well ( ) Adequately ☒ Poorly
2. In the balance between the mountain traditions and the stresses of current problems where do you place the magazine?  
( ) Balanced ☒ Old fashioned ( ) Too technical
3. What imaginative leadership does it give to the Council or to those reading about the Council?  
( ) Advanced ( ) Average ☒ Weak
4. Please write below any other criticisms, favorable or not, that bear on the magazine contents or format.

*I feel that ML&W is trying to balance traditions & current problems. However I, as an individual feel old fashioned stress is being put on current problems.*

Memorandum to:Board of Directors; Council Staff;  
Publications Committee and Advisors

From:

Editors of Mountain Life & Work

Date:

September 27, 1966

We are taking a hard look at our magazine to try to see how significant it is and how to improve it. On the basis of your reading of it during the last year will you answer a few questions for us?

1. Does the magazine report the work of the Council?  
☐ Very well    ☒ Adequately    ☐ Poorly
2. In the balance between the mountain traditions and the stresses of current problems where do you place the magazine?  
☒ Balanced    ☐ Old fashioned    ☐ Too technical
3. What imaginative leadership does it give to the Council or to those reading about the Council?  
☐ Advanced    ☐ Average    ☒ Weak
4. Please write below any other criticisms, favorable or not, that bear on the magazine contents or format.

More:  
 My only criticism is that it needs  
 to report more specifically doings of the Council.  
 All in all, I would have to rate it pretty  
 high in the Western pole. *Revised*



Memorandum to:Board of Directors; Council Staff;  
Publications Committee and AdvisorsFrom:Editors of Mountain Life & WorkDate:

September 27, 1966

We are taking a hard look at our magazine to try to see how significant it is and how to improve it. On the basis of your reading of it during the last year will you answer a few questions for us?

1. Does the magazine report the work of the Council?  
☐ Very well    ☒ Adequately    ☐ Poorly
2. In the balance between the mountain traditions and the stresses of current problems where do you place the magazine?  
☒ Balanced    ☐ Old fashioned    ☐ Too technical
3. What imaginative leadership does it give to the Council or to those reading about the Council?  
☒ Advanced    ☐ Average    ☐ Weak
4. Please write below any other criticisms, favorable or not, that bear on the magazine contents or format.

*"New" magazine is attractive, "professional," unusually well edited. The careful attention to proofreading gives the magazine real class. Material arranged well.*

*Eratis Williams*

**Appendix B- Proposal for a new *Mountain Life and Work***  
**Council of the Southern Mountains Papers, Series 8, Box 260, Folder 1**

**PROPOSAL**  
**for**  
**MOUNTAIN LIFE & WORK**

"There's a lack of communication between us.  
And *Mountain Life & Work* is communication."

—Elmer Rasnick

## MOUNTAIN LIFE &amp; WORK

One of the most obvious things the Council does in the way of communication between individuals and groups is to put out our monthly magazine, Mountain Life & Work. In the spring of 1972 we were printing about 3500 copies each month. Now, we average 7,000. Most of these go out in packets of 5, 10, 20 to grocery stores, gas stations, churches, rummage clubs, local community groups, and members of local unions. Many of these are passed out to new readers, often people who cannot afford to subscribe. Groups like the Pikeville, Ky., hospital workers have used several hundred copies at a time on their picket line to help publicize their cause. Anti-strip mining groups, local welfare rights groups, various co-ops, school librarians, miners, teachers, and local organizers are among the people who are asking for more copies to help with their work.

But we are not able to pay the cost of printing the extra copies we are now being asked to provide. In the past few months we have had to limit the number of pages, and the number of pictures because we have been short of funds. We are asking for money for one of the most important things the Council does.

At our last Board of Representatives meeting on September 22 at Cordia, Ky., members of the Board outlined what they saw as the need for ML&W:

1-Covering issues regularly - in ways that help local organizing

We need to give regular coverage to several issues which include: public assistance and various government compensation programs like Social Security and Black Lung, workers' safety and health, strip mining, labor struggles, and the special problems of women and Black and urban Appalachians. We would like to run a regular column on these issues each month, such as our regular column

"Unions and Jobs" which has appeared in 6 issues in the last year covering labor news and strikes. Elmer Rasnick tells why this is important:

One thing I've found about ML&W in organizing - they are a big help for people out organizing when you're going into new territory. It's one of the biggest assets that I have had, because it breaks that ice. People start thumbing through the pages and start seeing some of the things that's affecting them. And then they're ready to talk. ML&W introduces me. And after a while, when they get through reading it I got no problems - I can just talk all I want to them.

## 2- Reporting on the work of local organizations and local news:

The Council believes that people can make their local work stronger by learning from each other's experiences, mistakes, and successes. Board member John Tiller believes the magazine is one of our best tools for helping to do that:

In time...we can weld more people together by seeing their problems are exactly the same and they're battling the same thing.

And from Elmer Rasnick:

We might could learn from something that happened here and the same problem over there, and 'Hey, they done it over there! Here, ML&W says they done it!' If something happens in Kentucky here, what better way am I going to find out or people throughout Appalachia going to find out about it than ML&W?

To report on events in many local communities and local groups we need a much bigger phone bill. At the Board meeting we talked about setting up our version of "stringers" who would be responsible for getting news in their areas for the magazine:

There's things happening in your county that's not happening in my county. Each of us are responsible for bringing in something that has happened within the county you're from or local group - each and everyone of us sitting here. And we are spread around enough - so we can let everyone know what's going on around the states.  
-Joan White

But WATTS lines don't fit the boundaries of Appalachia. In fact they cut us into many small pieces. We need to be able to call our Board members - and to travel to events in local communities - strikes, welfare conventions,



demonstrations, celebrations - in order to cover them.

And the way we tell the stories is important. Almetor King says:

There's a lot of people that if they don't see a picture they don't read it - we need something that's going to catch their eye.

And Jim Somerville points out that once people have seen their pictures or their group's picture in ML&W they are really "part of that magazine" and are drawn into finding out about the Council and becoming a part of it. But pictures cost a lot - we need cameras, dark room equipment, and money to pay the printers a little more for each picture we add.

### 3- Telling the outside world

People who live outside of the region have some wrong ideas about us. They may think we are lazy folk who like to sit by the stream and chew grass. They may think we are stupid, can't talk right, can hardly read, and ride cows. Movies like "Deliverance" and TV shows like "The Beverly Hillbillies" make money by putting us down.

This magazine, ML&W will let the outside world know that the people in the hills, all of us in Appalachia - let the people in the outside world that's got it made know that we're getting tired of taking the daggone joke...tired of taking their left overs.

-Emmett Farmer

We throughout the Appalachias want to let people know that we are tired of being their Model City. They come into Appalachia and do their dirty work and pass it on to other states. Let people outside know that we are fighting and we don't appreciate things being put on us. Don't use us as a guinea pig! We're human beings and we want to live too.

-Joan White

### 4- For education

As well as the regular coverage we want to give to local work and news and issues, we want to produce "special issues" several times a year. Last April ML&W ran the first comprehensive coverage of Brown Lung and health problems in textile mills that has been printed in this country.

All of us knew a little about it - but this issue taught us a lot about the problems of the women who work in the cotton mills.

-Mike Maloney



The Textile Workers Union of America bought several hundred copies and are now ready to work with the Council in an exchange program between coal mine and cotton mill workers (see separate proposal). The May issue, called "Save the Land and People" focused on problems of taxes, strip mining, the Corps of Engineers, the Forest Service, and land reform. Two groups of Council members have recently asked for "special issues" which deal with problems of their lives. One issue is being worked on now that will show problems women in the mountains face, especially regarding health. Another issue in the future will show what life is like for mountaineers who have moved to the cities to find work.

Besides special issues of ML&W, we want to send out frequent news releases which will get our news into many local and county papers. Mike Maloney admits that "we'll never reach all the people we want to reach just through ML&W" and want the Council to work on a way to send out news which will tell the stories of the people and groups who make up the Council.

# Appendix C: Some letters to *Mountain Life and Work*

## Council of the Southern Mountains Papers- Series 8, Box 260, Folder 2

### SOME LETTERS TO ML&W

From: Southern Institute for Occupational Health project coordinator on brown lung

May 1976

To the entire staff of ML&W,

Congratulations on the latest issue. The entire magazine (March-April) set new standards for reporting, coverage, layout and production. I can't tell you all how impressed I am by the job you have done. Keep up the good work!

Frank Blechman,  
Columbia, S.C.

From: A Virginia subscriber

June 1976

The May issue is the first issue of ML&W I have seen and I really enjoyed reading it, from front to back. I am interested in the Scotia situation, especially the Dennis Boggs' family as I am personally acquainted with them.

Troy Stidham,  
Pound, Va.

From: Head of a southwestern Virginia paper

June 1976

Dear Council,

We just received our copy of ML&W and I want to congratulate you all on the two stories about Scotia. They're just what was needed.

Bill Blanton, The Plow  
Abingdon, Va.

From: A Tennessee member

September 1976

Dear Council,

The "Urban Appalachians" issue of ML&W is a good introduction to "the life and struggles of the displaced mountaineer." I would suggest a monthly update of our urban experience, perhaps a page each issue under "Urban Round Up."

I notice the non-urban articles involve a protest and three strikes. This is valid news, but be sure to report the results of such actions, the degrees of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. And what are the countless daily unreported ways in which mountain life and work are being defined and improved? The sections on community development are a step in the right direction/ there needs to be more of this, and more variety. As The Magazine of

the Appalachian South, you've got a big name to live up to; it's not just jive, is it? I'll be interested to read future issues of the magazine.

Jim Stokely,  
Newport, Tn.

---

From: an Ohio member... a thanks

September 1976

Dear Council,

I have read and gotten extra copies for friends and colleagues of the August number of ML&W. The emphasis on Urban Appalachians was excellent. Not only were the articles helpful to us as we prepare for our ministry with Appalachians in Norwood, but they called attention to the fact that a whole sociological phenomenon that is often overlooked is present and significant.

On behalf of the Norwood Branch of the Cincinnati's Urban Appalachian Council I would like to thank you for your working with UAC in publishing this material. I urge you to continue running articles and information about urban Appalachians where a large proportion of Appalachian people live and work.

David R. Sawyer, Pastor  
Norwood Church  
Norwood, Ohio

---

From: Red River resident....a thanks

December 1975

Dear Council,

Happy memories and consoling thoughts and appreciation to our Council friends in helping us so faithfully to stop the Dam. Your magazine did a part of that to stop it. Pardon me in the long delay, but none the less important, in expressing my and our sincere appreciation to the multiple thousands of people of Kentucky and the entire Union, even to Alaska. Heart felt thanks to every one of you, in behalf of the Save Our Red River Organization.

H.B. Farmer, member  
Save Our Red River Organization  
Stanton, Ky.

From: Member, West Virginia Wives and Widows Association

June 5, 1976

Dear Mountain Life & Work,

We have read both books on Scotia and our hearts go out to the Widows and their families. I was a coal miner's daughter and have been a coal miner's wife for thirty-six years, and I think I know how they must feel.

We will be in Washington this next week, lobbying for Black Lung again. We will speak for all miners' wives and widows, including those from Kentucky also.

You may put in the magazine how much we enjoyed reading it. I read and re-read every page. We have always loved this sort of reading. We look forward to each ML&W magazine and also the UMWA magazine. We think the staff is doing a fine job of reporting about the Scotia disasters and all the other interesting articles. Keep up the good work.

We will be waiting for our next issue.

Sincerely,  
Mrs. Dorothy Bryant,  
Ansted, West Virginia

---

From: Scotia Widow

August 7, 1976

Dear Council,

I look forward to receiving your paper. Please send me your March 1976 and April 1976 issues. I want to see if there is anything in those about the Scotia Mine explosion.

Yours truly,  
Mrs. Grover Tussey,  
Allen, Ky.

---

From: a member in Kentucky

July 31, 1976

Dear Council,

Please send me the copies of ML&W for March/April, May and June 1976. Sally Maggard and Dan Hendrickson did a very fine job reporting on Scotia Mines.

Thank you again. I will be looking forward to receiving the back issues and reading the new issues as soon as they are released.

Mrs. Judy Sergent,  
Ermine, Ky.



## SOME LETTERS TO MOUNTAIN LIFE AND WORK

October, 1976

Dear Council,

Please let me take this opportunity to express my thanks on behalf of the United Steelworkers of America and Local Unions # 13912, 14309, and 14057 for your devoted help on behalf of our battle against Acme Markets, Inc. Your support will help our members achieve the honorable recognition they deserve.

Please find enclosed a check from Local 14309 to help express our appreciation for your efforts.

Again, thanks!

Wilburn Boothe  
Staff Representative, United Steelworkers  
Beckley, WV

December, 1976

Dear Council,

Enclosed is a check for \$50.00 for your work. We wish it could be more, but we, too, are at minimum salary. This represents money we could otherwise have spent on Christmas gifts, so it is our gift to each other this Christmas. We are grateful for each of you and the work you do for all of us. Keep up the good work! We hope this will join with others in easing the crunch right now. We are glad to be partners with a group like you for the people of Appalachia.

Merry Christmas!

Don and Cynthia Steele  
Spencer, WV

December, 1976

Dear Council,

As a sociologist and having spent 8 months of 1975 in Southeastern Kentucky (Breathitt and Knox Counties), Mountain Life and Work is a constant, living reminder of my friends there and a tremendous learning experience which Kentucky offered me!

Glad you're around!!

Marianne Martin  
Madison, NJ

January, 1977

Dear Council,

I am again, as always, impressed by your persistence and generosity in the continuing struggles there. To us in the Northwest, the battles you face against black lung and the coal companies seem overwhelming, and your determination in your cause shows a strength we would do well to copy in our fights against poverty and unemployment. I am anxious to receive again ML&W so that I can keep up with your activities.

Let me again express my admiration for you all. Let's hope the new Washington administration brings to you better strip mining and safety regulation legislation.

Kit Miller  
Olympia, WA

LettersFrom July 7/8  
muc

Dear Council,



We have been very much saddened by the tragic death of Anise Floyd. It is a great loss to all of us and she will be missed terribly. (P) We, of the Pennsylvania Black Lung Association, want very much for you to keep us informed and to forward to us any literature concerning the regulations and standards being considered by the Department of Labor, and, also, of the Regional Black Lung Association. We appreciate all you are doing.

Sincerely,

Italy Pa. Black Lung Association, Windber, Pa.

KH  
JM

## LETTERS!

Dear Council,

My name is Tyrone Kenney, Editor of the Urban Appalachian Council's newsletter *Advocate*. ~~(First) I would like to commend the staff of *Mountain Life & Work* for the excellent coverage that was done on the Appalachian festival. ~~as good, that I would like to make a request. My July edition of the *Advocate* will also have a follow-up article on the Festival. I would appreciate your assistance by lending me the photographs by Cathy Stanley that appears on pages 22-24 and the picture of Chester Cornett (chairmaker). They will be returned to you immediately following the printing. My date to take it to the printers is June 30.~~~~

TP You are doing a great job with your publication.

-Tyrone Kenney, Cincinnati, OH.

re-type

cut

Dear Council,

Commissioner Harwood has asked me to acknowledge your article and thank you for your letter enclosing a clipping about winter road damage from *Mountain Life & Work*.

The article certainly is satisfactory, and we appreciate your assistance in bringing this situation to the attention of your readers.

-Albert W. Coates, Jr., Department of Highways & Transportation, Richmond, Va.

your

Dear Council,

I am impressed with *Mountain Life & Work*. May issue's lead article, for instance, is fine writing, better than we get in the *Boston Globe*. I also especially liked the Roundup department and the letter from the Stearns Women's Club.

-Paul Biehl, Cambridge, MA.

### **Vita**

Emma Parrish was born in Boone, NC, in 1993 and grew up in the plains of Northeast Colorado. She graduated from Hastings College in Hastings, Nebraska, in 2016 with a BA in English and History. She studied abroad at Queens University in Belfast, Northern Ireland 2013-2014 and returned to Belfast for six months in 2016 to pursue independent research. After living in Hastings, Nebraska, and working as a public librarian, Emma returned to Boone to pursue a Master of Arts degree in Appalachian Studies.

After graduation, Emma plans to remain in the mountains, pursue a career in public library work, and make handspun yarn.